

R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.

EUROSOURCE PLUS

The New Eurotheater Sourcebook for Cyberpunk®



CYBERPUNK®

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CYBERPUNK

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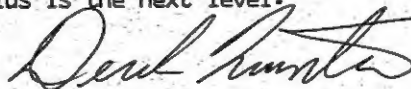
⇒ WE'VE COME BACK...

With the release of our innovative Pacific Rim Sourcebook, we felt that Europe — home of a major third of cyberpunk style — needed the same depth of study, especially since eurostyle is what most 'punks measure themselves against. Thus was born Eurosource Plus.

As we follow the trail blazed by M. Galeotti and Crew, we walk familiar ground — greed, grandeur and glitter — a culture that puts U.S. 'punks to shame. But this trip, we go deeper, seeking the motivations of Goldenkid and Eurocrat alike; the structures (social and financial) that support the facade of Fortress Europe. How does a Euro live? How does he travel? Where does he work? How was he taught? What does he really believe in? This isn't the land of guns and mohawks; more is done with a subtle glance and a single word than any number of popped rippers and whirring cyberlimbs. The forces that shape that subtlety are exposed as well — for the first time, the inner secrets of the Scandinavian clinics are laid bare.

You say "Europe's too refined for American 'punks!" Euro Plus will show you the wild side of the continent: the former East Bloc, where crime, poverty, corruption and war make cyberpunks feel right at home. At the same time, the economies and societies of New Central Europe are in flux — the perfect time for techno-revolutionaries to seize history by the scruff of the neck; jump on the tank, it's sure to be a bumpy ride.

Whether you're the fashionable scion of EC institutions taking what you know is yours — or a foreign barbarian just trying to crash the party — Eurosource Plus is the next level.



Derek Quintanar, Cyberpunk Senior Editor

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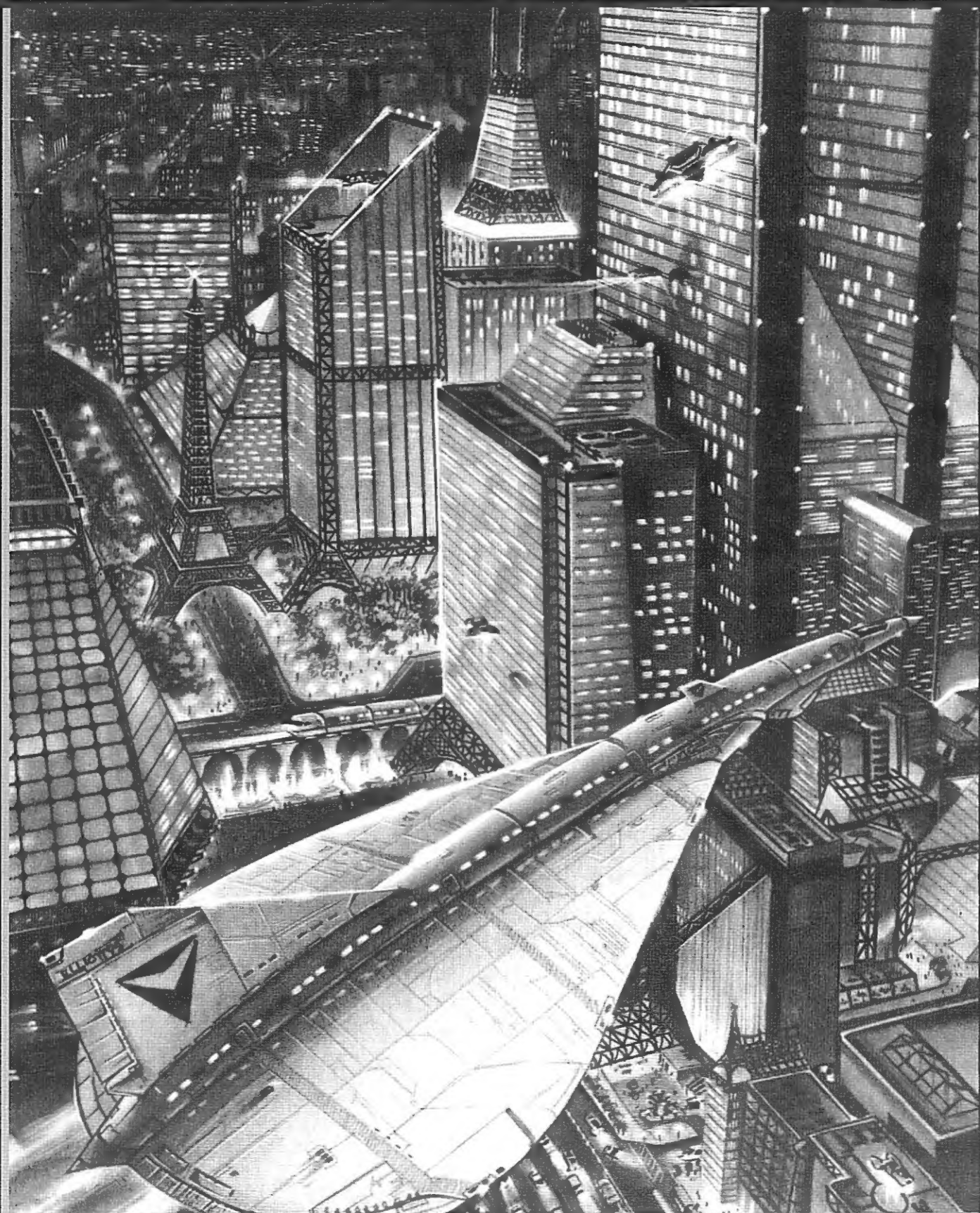


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FORTRESS EUROPE



ENTERING EUROPE

There are two ways to get in: legal and illegal.

Using the legal method, you have three options of getting to the borders of Europe. All of them entail applying for an entry permit about two weeks beforehand. For this permit you need to transmit a medical record, your credit rating and ID-data to your local EC-embassy. Of course, all of this should already be in your corporate passport along with your retina patterns, fingerprints and tissue samples. Therefore all you really need to do is let them have a look at your corp ID.

Not having an international corporate passport decreases your chance of getting an entry permit and increases exponentially the amount of paperwork involved. If need be, the Easies might want a certificate of good conduct. Pray you don't have any speeding tickets.

So far, so good. Next is transportation. Going by ship, airplane or blimp differs only in the amount of time you spend on the voyage. Either way, you end up in a security arrival complex. If you think security in your reasearch center was tough, think again. The Euros have the money (and the interest) not to let any troublemakers into their country.

Let's look at how William Leeb got through the check points.

He arrived via orbital shuttle in Frankfurt Airport. Along with the other passengers he was channeled to the customs check point. Here's where the fun began. First thing the customs police did was search for illegal implants. Unfortunately, William was the proud owner of a new Raven Microcyb™ cyberarm. The customs police asked him to step into a side room and undress. Two armed officers took his clothes away for intensive search while two other policemen probed his body for illegal implants. All the while they kept on apologizing for the fuss and the low temperature in the testing room. Next they opened the cyberarm, checked the strength regulators and looked for illegal weaponry and hidden storage spaces. At this point William noticed the extra ducts beside the airconditioning. They are used to fill the room with paralyzing nerve gas in case of an emergency. Meanwhile the results of the blood sample test taken earlier were transmitted. They said that William had no contagious illnesses aside from slight cold. With a friendly remark to do something against that cold he was again released into the stream of passengers. All of this took an hour and some embarrassment.

Next stop was the pass controls. There were three queues. The first was reserved for citizens of the EC, the second for people with corporate passports and the third for the rest. As can be expected the first two queues were virtually empty while the third one was packed with people. The customs officers have to ver-

ify every ID thoroughly, which needs some time given the variety of passports. In addition, all people coming in this way must endure a retina check and, if need be, a DNA test. These tests also take time to process, further increasing the waiting span. Luckily, all this time can be used fruitfully signing documents saying that you do not wish political asylum in the EC. These papers are mandatory.

These tests and controls normally take 45 minutes for a foreign businessperson and up to three hours for non-corporate tourists, i.e. you. After that, you're free to go wherever you want.

If you think the controls in the ports take long, you probably haven't seen the jams at the eastern frontier crossings. People still want to enter the EC via regular roads. If you are thus inclined, pack a sleeping bag and provisions.

There are several reasons for the land border controls taking longer than usual. The problem is that people trying to get into the EC this way normally want to keep their transports. Therefore, customs police also have to check cars and trucks in addition to the normal ID-controls.

Again, there are different queues for corps and EC-citizens on one hand and the miserable rest on the other. These are further split for trucks and personal transports. The queues for insider traffic, i.e. corps and Euros, are seldom very long. In Fortress Europe terms, this means the normal ID-checks along with a search of your car using sniffers and other remote probes.

The miserable rest has put up with not only an in-depth check of your persona, but sometimes the literal taking apart of their vehicles. If you so much as sneeze during the customs procedure, they will put you in quarantine for as long as they wish. The funny thing is, you have to pay for *that* service yourself. All of this accounts for waiting periods of over a week at times.

Around the frontier crossings, virtual cities have sprung up catering to people wanting to cross the border into the Land of Rape and Honey. If you're clever, you rent a driver for your car while spending a couple of days in your hotel. The Rent-a-Drivers practically live in your car for the entire duration, inching it steadily towards your destination. Once they are within a half day's distance of the customs station, they alert you. Most hotels offer this service with specially-licensed drivers.

Warning: It is not advisable to let cheap locals without a license do this job for you. If you're lucky, they only sift through your bags and steal everything they can. Some of them have a sick sense of humor and plant minor amounts of drugs in your car. That spells the end of your voyage permanently.

So what you do to easily get through customs is get an official invitation by an EC-directorate or a corporation. That way you may also use the express way for corps. Of course, this only pertains to law abiding citizens with a clean record and no black market cyberware. How you get an invitation is an entirely different story.



THE BORDER POLICE

The European land borders are still taken care of by the separate countries. That means the various police or paramilitary units used by Europe's states still do what they did for the last fifty years. They take care of all those airports, land borders and coast patrols.

The exact set up of the forces differ from country to country. What they have in common is that they're paid by Interior Commission and they can call for assistance by the EDF. Assistance in the form of satellite surveillance and interception aircraft is standard op procedure. Otherwise they are a self-contained and formidable force. The Interior Commission also takes care that all customs facilities are readily informed of unwanted persons using Interpol's Pyramid mainframe.

Let's look at some highlights of the European defense architecture.

The land borders along the Italian, Austrian and German borders are even more secure than the old border between East and West Germany. Stepping close to the border your first obstacle is a chain-link fence topped with razor wire. The fence is meant to keep animals from the mine field immediately behind it. Once you've navigated the mines and trip wires, you face a sheer wall 6 metres high. It is quite thick and can withstand anything up to serious anti-tank weaponry. If you're thinking of simply jumping on this wall, think again. It is topped with loads of glass shards that can pierce your camo suit like butter—and you will need the suit once you get over.

Behind the first wall lies a strip of grass bordered by a second wall higher than the first one. The grass strip has tracks for the patrol cars that rapid response teams use to quickly close a security breach. They normally stay within the guard houses set along the second wall. From there, they control the Automatic Point Defense systems installed in the first and second walls. The APDS are equipped with motion sensors, thermographic imagers and seismic sensors. In addition, they carry microwavers and GPMGs in armored turrets. Once the APDS see an object they alert the nearest guard house and open fire. Since they are set up with overlapping lines of fire, a single target may take hits from up to three installations. Don't even think about trying to get into the system net-wise. The APDS is contained in a closed system hardwired directly to the nearest guard station.

At irregular intervals, the teams patrol the strip between the walls. To avoid being slaughtered, each guard carries a small transmitter that gives out a coded signal as soon as one of the apds notice the guard. The codes are changed daily as an added security measure.

The rapid response teams along this line work very closely with one another, and readily lend assistance. At least, they would if there weren't national pride. Most commanders wait until the last possible moment until they call for help. Unofficially, it's considered a black mark to request assistance from a friendly, but foreign unit. It is very bad PR to tell your commanding officer others saved the day.

NPC DOSSIER

TYPICAL RRT: Uwe Jung, Wachtmeister, BGS, Austria (Solo)

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| INT: 7 | REF: 7 | ATTR: 5 |
| MA: 6 | EMP: 7 | TECH: 5 |
| COOL: 5 | LUCK: 5 | BOD: 7 |

SKILLS: *Combat Sense: 4, Rifle 6, Martial Arts: 5, First Aid: 3, Endurance: 3, Awareness: 4, Heavy Wpns: 5, Athletic: 3, Drive: 4, Basic Tech: 2, Weaponsmith 4, Melee: 4*

CYBERWARE: Skinweave, Biomonitor

EQUIPMENT: flak vest & pants, helmet w/ smartlink, H&K MPK-2020 (airports) or whatever rifle is more appropriate. In addition, a squad carries an assortment of heavier weaponry like the G-6 SAW and anti-tank weaponry like the Rheinmetall Kanone.

THE COASTS

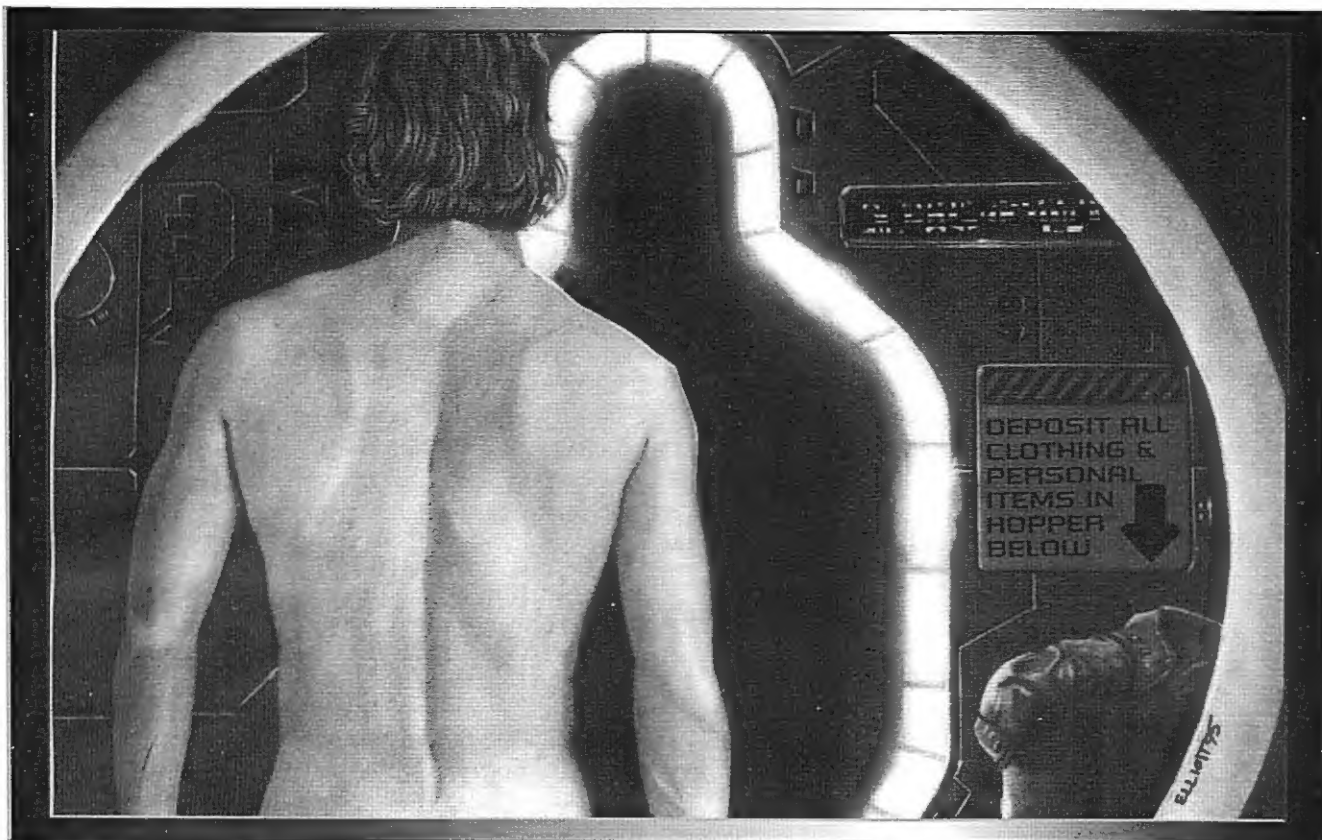
The policing of Europe's coasts has been united into one hand: the Navy. The Navy handles its duty to protect Europe's borders in two ways. They can be grossly divided into above and below waterline operations.

Above waterline, business is normally handled with fast patrol boats armed with intelligent torpedoes, anti-air missiles and light rail-guns. As they work in pairs, this is normally enough to deter anyone along Europe's northern coasts. In case of emergency they can always call for back up at the next air force base. Once called the air force can get a squadron of AV's equipped to deal with vessels within fifteen minutes into the air. Large operations like boarding actions are usually accompanied by the Navy's multitask frigates. These can carry enough troops to board even large transport ships.

The Mediterranean Patrol is special in that they have more business than anyone else. The Mediterranean is home to nearly two-thirds of the Navy's forces. They have the tricky duty to patrol the Greek Islands and keep gun runners from crossing the Adriatic. To this end they use heavily armed cigarette boats to track down would-be smugglers. The fast patrol boats normally used by the navy are simply too slow to keep up with the smuggler's high-powered speed boats. In addition they work in groups of three, a measure taken to avoid high casualties. The smugglers operating in the Greek Islands not only use the best boats around, they also have access to high tech weaponry. This fact sometimes results in small fleets of speed boats racing around between the islands battling each other with missiles and rail guns. Needless to be said, Mediterranean Navy personnel are the toughest bunch of marines around.

The underwater section of the coast patrol forces have been set up since smuggling via small two man subs has come into fashion. Even though expensive, the subs are well concealed and can carry large quantities of contraband. Even





though they can be spotted from orbit, they cannot be identified. This means, the warning time on the short run between Turkey and Greece is further decreased. And it is very unpopular with commanding officers to sink the private sub yachts of goldenkids.

This is especially true in the area around Hamburg. EBM Hamburg employs its own fleet of submarines of all sizes and uses. But they are not the only ones to use subs as regular freight transports. The port of Hamburg teems with vessels of all kinds and most of them don't care about being seen.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that a great percentage of subs are nuclear powered. The Euros think dimly of wasting their coasts with radioactive wreckage from frond sunken subs. Therefore several subs have been equipped to board enemy subs rather than sink them. These subs are comparatively small and normally carry twenty highly professional marines as well as one or two underwater ACPAs.

In recent times several northern European nations have propagated the installation of hydrophones along their coasts. They hope to perfect surveillance underwater by identifying each passing ship by the sound of its screw. Rumors speak of a similar system already in operation around Hamburg, but as always this remains to be substantiated.

The biggest advantage of Fortress Europe is its web of surveillance satellites installed above Europe. They monitor

every move along Europe's borders with unfailing precision. The information gained with their imaging systems is transmitted and spread to the various user with almost no time delay. This ensures that neither an ultra-light flyer crossing the border to Italy nor a mini-sub at the Riviera remain alone for long.

You know why most streets in Chemnitz have black sheets spanned above them? Spysats. They have installed satellites above our heads, payed for with our money. They can see you anytime, anywhere. Each and every move you make is monitored. You can't escape them. You ask, why bother looking at innocent burgers? It's for security. Their security. We have long lost rulership over our country. The goldenkids and their bred-to-specifications lapdogs rule us and we just don't know it!

Bernd Endner, street-punk, Chemnitz

Yeah, we got him there OK. I told you we would.

Packed him in a bulletproof coffin strapped to a microlight. Sent him across near the Maribor, Leibnitz border.

They were already over the border when the missile hit. The coffin's retro and chute did their job and we picked him up five minutes later. He made it to Vienna in time for his meeting.

No we didn't we use an RPV. Got a mad Amerikano who was willing to try the run for the chance of getting through. Made it more plausible to the border guards too, they got a body so they were happy.

Got the rest of the money?

Antoine Rozier,
Border Runner

GETTING A EURO CARD

Temporary Cards

To apply for a PAC (Provisional Alien's Card) you need your passport, a clean medical record, and a clean police record (no convictions for serious crime in the past five years).

Applications must be made at an EC embassy or consulate no less than one month before your intended date of arrival in the EC. There is a standard application fee of 150 eb, regardless of the type of PAC you're applying for. An extra payment of 250 eb is required for late applications that require urgent processing.

PACs are very limited. They do not entitle holders to EC services such as free food, housing, or medical care if you're injured. Anyone using a PAC to visit Europe'd better make sure they have lots of spare cash and good medical insurance.

Like the normal smart cards, you must carry them at all times. Failing to do so means automatic sentences like deportation, heavy fines or both. In addition, you're treated like a barbarian everywhere you might go. PACs can be voided by the EC at any time, if you're lucky they might even let you know in advance.

- **TOURIST** - white card - permits you to travel within current tourist areas, may not work within Europe. Costs 100 eb per week, max. four weeks.
- **SHORT STAY** - green card - permits you to travel anywhere that's not currently restricted to foreigners, may not get a job within Europe. Costs 200 eb per week, max. ten weeks. This card is usually used by foreign medias and corporate workers on assignment in Europe.

Permanent Cards

This is the big one, permanent European residence. To apply for a Permanent Resident's Card (PRO) you need your passport, a clean medical record, and a clean police record (no convictions for serious crime ever). If you can keep your record clean for five years while residing in Europe on a PRC it will be upgraded to full citizenship.

Applications must be made at an EC embassy or consulate. The basic way of getting a PRC is simply to buy 750,000 eb worth of Euro Bonds, expensive but many think it's worth it. The other way is through corporate or EC sponsorship. If you have skills that are in high demand in the EC and are offered permanent employment with a European corporation you or they must pay 250,000 eb. Alternatively if you get employment with the EC itself the department can apply for a PRC, they don't have to pay for it.

Like PACs, PRCs can be voided by the EC at any time, though there will always be an inquest before it is revoked.

ARTISTIC IDS

Not many people know it, but you can get European citizenship from the commission of the interior for 'cultural contributions'.

There is a department of the commission dedicated to the recovery of European cultural and artistic treasures. They have a 'pink book' of lost treasures. These are treasures that are of European origin, but are no longer in their rightful place. They have either been lost or stolen.

Return of any of these treasures guarantees the allocation of at least one full citizenship to the person(s) responsible for its return. Some have much higher rewards, the Mona Lisa is worth twenty IDs for example. Of course there are also large monetary rewards for Euros or those that would prefer cash to European papers.

Naturally the names on IDs issued for cultural contributions can be different from those on the recipients' birth certificates, a little anonymity can go a long way.

GETTING INTO THE MARGINS

If you're a Eurocitizen then you can visit anytime, they're associate members of the EC after all.

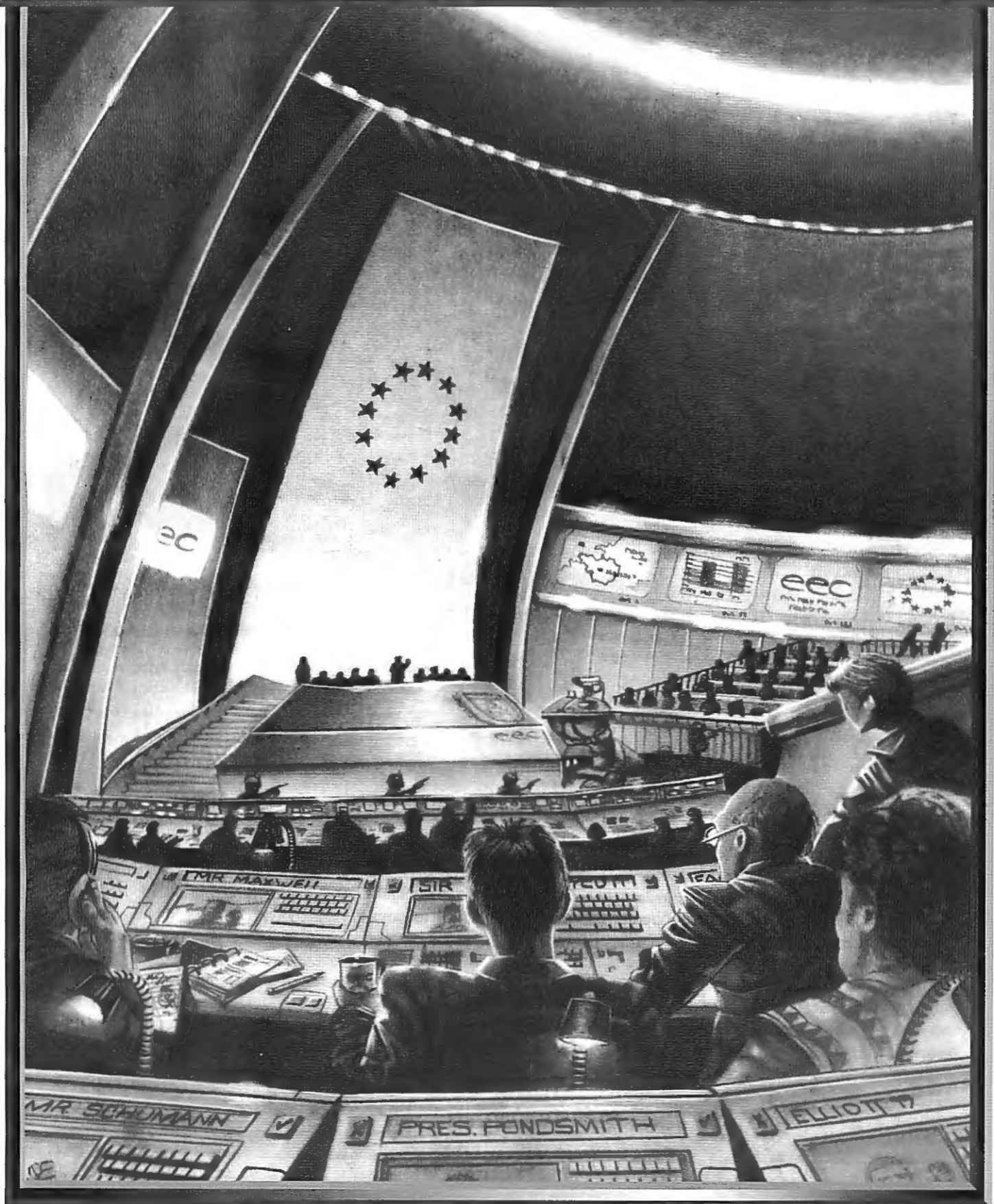
Getting into Scandinavia is even harder than getting into Europe for outsiders. Effectively the rules are the same, just add 20% to all the costs and double the time to process the paperwork.

Getting into NCE is easy. Anyone with the cash to get there and live there will be welcomed with open arms. It'll cost you around 20 eb for a tourist visa, and 100 eb for a temporary residence permit.

- **LIMITED WORK** - yellow card - permits you to travel anywhere a citizen may, may get a job within Europe. Costs 500 eb per week, max. one year. This card is the one for those who think they may be able to succeed in Europe, gives them a chance to try it before applying for citizenship.
- **OFFICIAL GUEST** - red card - permits you to travel anywhere the EC wants, may do whatever work you were invited to do. Duration determined by EC. They ask you in, they make the rules.



WHO RUNS EUROPE?





EUROPE IS RUN BY MONEY

Only taxpayers are allowed to vote in local/national elections as well as EC elections. Originally this was to encourage people to register for taxation, but it has become politically useful to disenfranchise the unemployed. The size of an EC constituency is based on the tax it pays into the Community's coffers. This technique effectively makes voting power a factor of salary.

Feelings within Europe vary widely. The populace are often unhappy and disillusioned, especially the unemployed. Many would vote against Europe if they could. In the richer countries people are upset by the amount of their money that goes to the poorer countries. In the poorer countries they are upset by the amount of control the richer countries have over their lives.

The original intention was to use support from the richer countries to increase living standards in the poorer. Why hasn't it happened yet?

Like the rest of the world, a lot of EC employment is in multinational corporations. Many of them are EC-based corps with headquarters in the richer countries. Naturally, all the higher-level executives are based in these HQs. Thus, not only does the corporation pay most of its tax in a rich country, but so do its highest-paid employees. Companies founded in poorer coun-

tries are usually snapped up by the bigger corps as soon as they look like they've got long-term profitability. No matter how much money gets pumped into the poorer countries, a lot of it comes straight back to the richer ones.

LOCAL POLITICS

—Extracted from *Understanding Government* by A. Souza

With the exception of Britain (which is under martial law), every European country has elections to select the local government. In some countries there are multiple tiers of government. These politicians are selected to handle local issues, mainly how to spend their chunk of the tax money. They are responsible to their electorate for the smooth running of local amenities and control (in theory) local public services, though most are provided by contracted companies. They are also responsible for forwarding requests to the European Council for grants and funding.

The national governments are also responsible for taxation and policies that are not covered by EC directives. They decide which directives they can avoid or bypass and still look like they're following the rules. National governments work very hard pushing their pet projects with the Council and trying to attract major developments and contracts to their country. They also spend time lobbying to get their people onto the Secretariat. The rest of the time is spent convincing the electorate they were the right choice.



These local politicians are usually based very close to their electorate. Many never make it to higher politics due to lack of charisma, or the correct political views to appeal to the larger populace.

To a large extent local politics is a grooming ground for aspiring Euro-councillors. Those that survive will develop at least some of the political adroitness, contacts, and backers they will need in the big league.

⇒ SHOCK RESULT IN MUNICH BY-ELECTION

There was a unexpected change in Munich's council yesterday. Joachim Krüger of the Free Earth Alliance won an overwhelming victory against Karl-Heinz Ulrich of the People's Democratic Party.

Krüger's victory in the München Ost election is even more amazing given the strength of the opposition. Ulrich (the favourite) was sponsored by IEC, Munich's largest employer. His election was expected to be automatic. Failure indicates a grassroots swing in favour of the ecological parties, and could be the beginning of a major change in local German politics. Of course, it could just be the result of a well-orchestrated ad campaign. Krüger's regular vid slot must have helped.

Herr Krüger was exuberant, citing his victory as "a great blow against the forces that would rape the Earth of her riches." Herr Ulrich was unavailable for comment.

-Politiken Kommentar, 15 May 2020

⇒ BUNDESTAG MEMBER SHOT

Joachim Krüger, Munich's Free Earth Alliance Bundestag member is today recovering in hospital.

Herr Krüger was shot during a drive-by shooting targeted at members of a group he was talking to. The police are treating his injury as unintentional assault.

-Politiken Kommentar, 26 May 2020

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: JOACHIM KRÜGER
ROLE: POLITICIAN (ROCKERBOY)

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| INT: 8 | REF: 7 | TECH: 6 |
| COOL: 9 | ATTR: 9 | LUCK: 6 |
| MA: 5 | BODY: 4 | EMP: 8/7 |
| AGE: 23 | BTM: -1 | |

SKILLS: *Charismatic Leadership* +6, *Personal Grooming* +4, *Wardrobe & Style* +3, *Streetwise* +4, *Human Perception* +3, *Interview* +2, *Social* +2, *Perform* +4, *Awareness* +3, *Compose* +7, *Education* +4, *Expert (ecology)* +5, *Brawling* +3, *Dance* +4, *Melee* +2, *Basic Tech* +3, *Play Instrument (guitar)* +5

CYBERWARE: Techhair; AudioVox; Nasal filters

Joachim was a fairly successful rocker working the Munich bars with a regular slot on the local vid. Specialising in folk music with a strong pro-environment motif, his songs contain a lot of political satire. He is fairly quiet for a rocker, preferring to think before talking.

One of his friends registered him for the East Central Munich elections as a Free Earth Alliance candidate (Joachim was a regular member). He wasn't happy at first, but went along with the idea.

The election culminated in a savage campaign from Karl-Heinz Ulrich. Ulrich, who had been groomed for the position, had seen his chances fading and resorted to smear tactics. This increased Joachim's dedication (and disgusted the voters), leading to the PDP's first regional loss in ten years. Joachim feels his shooting a week later was intentional and has started a campaign against the PDP.

THE EURO COUNCIL

All full member states of the European Community have equal rights in the European Council in Brussels. That is each state has the right to one councillor for every hundred million eurodollars (2012 value, adjusted by inflation) it pays into the EC. This means that the richer states get a far greater say in what happens with their money than the smaller ones, but they're the ones footing the bill, neh?. Council constituencies are carefully based on the amount of taxes paid by them so that those individuals paying the most have the most control of the council. This has led to the situation where some suburbs popular with the rich have a councillor of their own while some cities don't.

Elections are held every four years in November, with numbers of councillors for a country being based on the average EC

tax paid in the previous four years. Bye-elections are held when necessary to make up for extra councillors needed due to the death or unexpected retirement of councillors.

The 536 members (as of the 2018-2022 session) of the Council have the ultimate decision making power in Europe. They are the most powerful and highest-paid elected politicians in the world. Their votes affect the lives of millions of people, and their every move is studied by the media and passed on to the public.

Within the council there are grades of power. The speaker is effectively in charge of the Council. He has final say in all debates and decides who will speak and when. The assistant speaker has the power of the speaker in his absence, she attends all sessions of the council that he doesn't. Both are selected by majority vote from the Council. The leaders of the various unofficial voting groups exercise considerable power, their decisions usually being echoed by their followers. Within each group are 'senior members', those that have served for a number of years and are influential on newer members. Then there are the 'sprinters', these are usually young (by council standards) high-flyers who have got the people's attention (or the media's) and are milking it. Finally, there are the 'normal' councillors making themselves known and steadily building a powerbase.

THE VOTING GROUPS

There are many different voting groups in the EC council. To make it more difficult to follow, voting groups differ depending on the issue(s) involved, political or financial. Yet more groups form for environmental and economic reasons.

When multiple interests are involved in the same vote, as economic and environmental issues often are, the voting can get extremely complex as group members shift allegiance. Conflicts of interest between sponsors can be amusing to watch under these conditions.

The most intense negotiations and voting occur at the beginning of the Council session when the Speaker and Assistant Speaker are chosen. If the Council cannot come to agreement within a week then new Council elections must be held.

THE COUNCILLORS

—By Denny O'Rourke of *Real People* magazine

The European Council is the top level of politics. You don't get to the council by accident—but it may be necessary for your rivals to have accidents. Getting and holding a council seat generally requires a constant flow of money. The correct political 'face' for the targeted constituency must be worn at all times. Larger constituencies require continuous promotion and advertising. The smaller one require expensive socializing, and commitment to popular local issues and charities (the rich won't support someone who doesn't join them in their endeavours to be seen doing good).

NEW PRESIDENT SELECTED

Herr Rolf Schneider was today selected as Speaker of the European Council.

Herr Schneider, thirteenth Speaker candidate this session, was very much a middle of the road selection. He is generally liberal, with slightly right-wing attitudes to the economy and more left-leaning views on the environment.

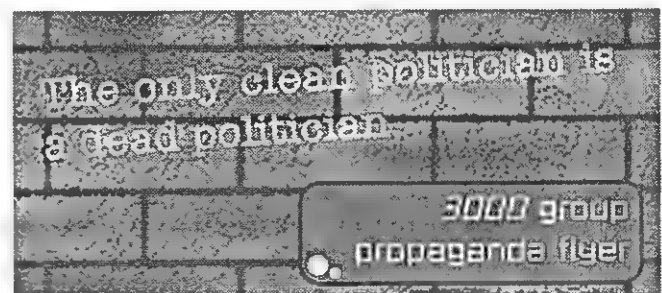
Hopefully Herr Schneider will be able to control the council better than Mijneer van de Fries last session.

—Politiken Kommentar, 21 February 2018

Councillors are also very busy people. There's official debates, votes and functions that must be attended. You must also spend time on vid shows, press conferences, official openings and diplomatic meetings. Time should also be spent with members of the Secretariat discussing plans, but this is often not possible, so assistants get sent instead.

So, is it all work and no play for the councillors? Not on your life. Most councillors take advantage of the four month winter break to live it up and cultivate contacts. Throughout the council session there are extravagant parties. Each councillor is expected to hold at least one party a year for the whole Council. Those with power in voting groups, or trying to build up contacts, must hold more parties to cultivate the 'right' people.

Getting onto the council virtually guarantees your financial future. The salary and allowances are huge. Corporations are keen to shower you with 'samples' of their latest products in the hope you'll be seen using them. At the higher levels, you will even receive homes. There's nothing like having the Speaker resident (if only a few days a year) in a development to increase its desirability, not to mention its security. Once you step down from the Council (i.e., lose an election) you're guaranteed a place in a megacorp as a spokesman or consultant. If you cultivated the right contacts while in office, the only way is up.



THE SECRETARIAT

—Extracted from *Understanding Government* by A. Souza

These are the high-level civil servants of Europe. If the Council are the directors of the European Community, the Secretariat are the senior managers. At the top of the Secretariat are the commissioners. They are assigned from the top tier of the Secretariat and hold the position for the duration of the Council's session. The better commissioners tend to hold the position for multiple sessions.

Each commissioner is responsible for the actions of their commission and the interaction between their commission and the others. The commissioners have monthly meetings where they discuss the current situation. The commissioners' meetings are headed and controlled by the Commission Chair, a revolving post that changes yearly. The Chair is responsible for bringing important events to the attention of the Council. Biannually, the commissions hold week-long conferences where the commissioners and their top aides plan mutual policies.

The Secretariat is responsible for analysing the current situation within their commission's sphere of interest; projecting future trends; and providing the Council with suggestions on the path the Community should take. It would be impossible for the Council to function without the Secretariat. The experience and knowledge of the situation within their various spheres of interest allows them to provide essential advice to the Council.

The aim of the Secretariat is to further the cause of the European Community. They put aside personal and national aspersions to concentrate on the bigger, European view. Many are brought in from outside; experts in their fields are recruited from all countries of Europe. Secretariat positions are assigned by the various Commissioners with approval required from the Council. There have been accusations of favouritism and bias within the Secretariat in the past. Hopefully, these have been laid to rest with the improved links between Council and commissions since the German walkout of 2016.

⇒ MORE SCANDAL AT THE TOP

Councillor Evienne de Tours is today in trouble once again. Photos have been made available to a major pornographic periodical which allegedly show her involved in acts of indecency and various perversions.

Cllr. de Tours' only comment was that she "hasn't done anything illegal", but she's "looking forward to seeing the photos."

—Politiken Kommentaar, 6 August 2019

Politicians... strange bunch of people. All the candidates for a very well-paid job get together in groups and decide between them who ought to apply. Why is this allowed? Would you hire anyone for a post if the employment agency restricted your choice of applicants? Why should applicants choose who can apply—that should be the employer's decision.

Why do we put up with this from the political parties? Demand to see all the potential candidates next vote time. Don't let the parties take away your vote!

...Surely anarchy would be a lot easier all round than this Euromess.

—Torrin Winter of Public Anarchy, interviewed by Sharon Oakley for Network 54

The French and the British hate each other. The Greeks and the Turks hate each other. No one trusts the Germans, the Italians or the Spanish. They call this European UNION?

newly elected
Councilmember





The New Nobility

—by “Jean DeVilliers”

The Secretariat are self-sacrificing civil servants who dedicate their lives to improving conditions within the Community without care for national issues. So says the Interior Commission. What a load of ridiculous propaganda!

The Secretariat are a bunch of self-serving power mongers pushing the aims of their government or corporate sponsors. Their only objective is to secure their wealth and power. Have you seen the way these guys live!? The aristocracy of old have nothing on these guys.

They all receive six-figure salaries, tax free of course to cut down on unnecessary paperwork. Their housing is, as with all other easies, provided at negligible cost. Unlike the rest, though, they live in large, luxurious houses more reminiscent of mansions and chateaux than the efficient arcologies and villages the others get. Most of their food and drink bills are written off on expenses by the simple expedient of inviting their friends round and claiming it's a business meeting. They also get vehicles with chauffeurs—so they can make it to meetings, of course. For extra income there's the kickbacks that are forced on them from governments, corporations, and other less-open sponsors. There's always goods and valuables being handed out as 'shows of friendship' to keep the Secretariat's minds on their various sponsor's interests.

There's sometimes even more money available to *prevent* contracts from being handed out; it's rumoured that millions were spent preventing the planned drug sniffers from being installed at various entry ports back in 2017. Not that I would dare imply that the Secretariat work with organised crime; I have far too much survival sense for that... On top of these sources of income they have other, less-moral, ways of getting much larger sums. Being on the Secretariat means they are constantly being bombarded by information they could use for personal gain. They are also the ones that influence the decisions made by the Council, so it is very easy to push the Council in the direction most useful for them. Of course our trusted servants would never do a thing like that would they?

Did you know, for example, that a Juan Gomez bought twelve blocks of unoccupied apartment blocks in Croydon just two months before the ESA announced plans to develop the spaceport there? Juan Gomez was the cousin of Maria Carvero, then the technology commissioner and responsible for the ESA. Does anything sound suspicious yet?

It's the same when any large project starts. Somehow, a relative or friend of someone in the Secretariat makes a quick killing at the public's expense. Seems that they always seem to be in the right place at the right time... Somehow these examples of corruption, no matter how well documented, never seem to be investigated. For some reason there's never enough evidence to make an arrest. Strange, *non?*

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: EVIENNE DE TOURS

ROLE: POLITICIAN (ROCKERGIRL)

INT: 9 **REF:** 6 **TECH:** 4

COOL: 7 **ATTR:** 10 **LUCK:** 3

MA: 5 **BODY:** 4 **EMP:** 6

AGE: 32 **BTM:** -1

SKILLS: *Charismatic Leadership* +5, *Personal Grooming* +7, *Wardrobe & Style* +8, *Human Perception* +4, *Interview* +3, *Social* +5, *Perform* +5, *Awareness* +2, *Compose* +6, *Education* +6, *Dance* +5, *Melee* +4

Evienné grew up in a very rich family. After a highly successful scholastic career she went to the Sorbonne, where her interest in politics began. By age 23, she was a member of the Chamber of Delegates. Elected to the European Council in 2018, she stood as an independent on an 'individual freedoms' ticket.

Evienné has had a very colourful career, highlighted by scandals. She has become one of the main targets for the media when they are looking for 'public interest' on the Council. She is renowned as one of Europe's top party holders, and people have been known to pay thousands for the chance of attending one of her parties at either her Paris house or her farm just outside Tours.



So they have a lot of money. 'So what, it's only money' you say. Well... On top of all that lovely euro they also have a lot of power. The sort of power that can start wars, get people killed or give people work. *Non*, you say. They are controlled. They only make suggestions. The Council makes the final decisions. *Mais oui*, says I. They are in charge of their own watchers—the agents of the interior commission work for them. They are the ones that give the Council their various options—and can phrase it so the option they want is selected.

No decision is made in council without it coming through the secretariat first. Who suggests what farm subsidies and taxes should be? Who decides where to build those nice, new economic growth developments? Who plans our roads and telecommunications links? Who is in charge of the police and our security? If the Community's involved, they arrange it.

All come from moderately wealthy, professional families. Almost all seem to come from the same private schools and exclusive universities. Applicants from other educational institutions are somehow never acceptable. All belong to the same clubs, usually before they are appointed. Their children know one another and spend time together, especially their holidays. They get married to one another. OK, so most live in the same luxury suburb of Brussels, and it's natural they get to know one another. It's fairly normal for people to marry their childhood friends, people in the same social strata. Is it also natural that these children should move quickly into high-level positions within the commissions? Sounds suspicious, *non*? What these people are doing is building their own little dynasties. They are becoming the elite of Europe, a new nobility. What makes it worse is that they are doing it in full view. We are letting them, *merdre*, we are paying them to do it!

Naturally they want to protect themselves and their power. Many people have disappeared investigating the Secretariat. Department D is said to be very efficient in their work. This is why I am writing this under a *nom de plume* and having it delivered by a very good netrunner.

Is there anything we can do to stop them from taking over? Is it too late to stop them before we work for them, our 'servants', completely? Let's hope so.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONS

The EC commissions work together in mutual harmony for the benefit of Europe's citizens. Well, in a way I suppose. The commissioners do have regular meetings where they discuss mutual interests. The commissions do work together a lot, when they have to. In reality they are constantly competing with one another for power and the public's attention.

FINANCE COMMISSION

Money makes the world go round. It keeps the EC going too. This Commission is one of the most powerful groups in the world—it controls the Eurobank. It's certainly the most powerful EC commission.

The Finance Commission controls the EC's finances. It is their duty to ensure that the commissions' budgets are sufficient for their needs and that there is enough money available to cover them. The commission is also responsible for collecting taxes from the EC branches of multinational corporations based outside the EC. Finance Commission approval is required for all major European projects. They audit all projects for financial irregularities and are continually monitoring and auditing the commissions (including themselves). A bad report from Finance Commission investigators is enough to close a branch, project, or department or have many of it's personnel transferred or fired.

The Finance Commission also provides auditors that check company and personal finances. They regularly audit the finances all companies and individuals with holdings or through-

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: ALEXANDER HARDENBERG
ROLE: ADMINISTRATOR
(CORPORATE)

| | | |
|---------|---------|----------|
| INT: 9 | REF: 6 | TECH: 5 |
| COOL: 9 | ATTR: 6 | LUCK: 6 |
| MA: 5 | BODY: 5 | EMP: 6/5 |
| AGE: 42 | BTM: -2 | |

SKILLS: Resources +6, Personal Grooming +2, Wardrobe & Style +4, Interrogation +4, Intimidate +5, Human Perception +8, Interview +6, Social +4, Accounting +9, Awareness +6, Education +6, Expert (corporate accounts) +5, Expert (fraud) +5, Expert (tax evasion) +7, Language (English) +7, Language (French) +5, Language (Spanish) +5, Dance +2, Driving +4, Basic Tech +4, Electronic Security +3, Forgery +6

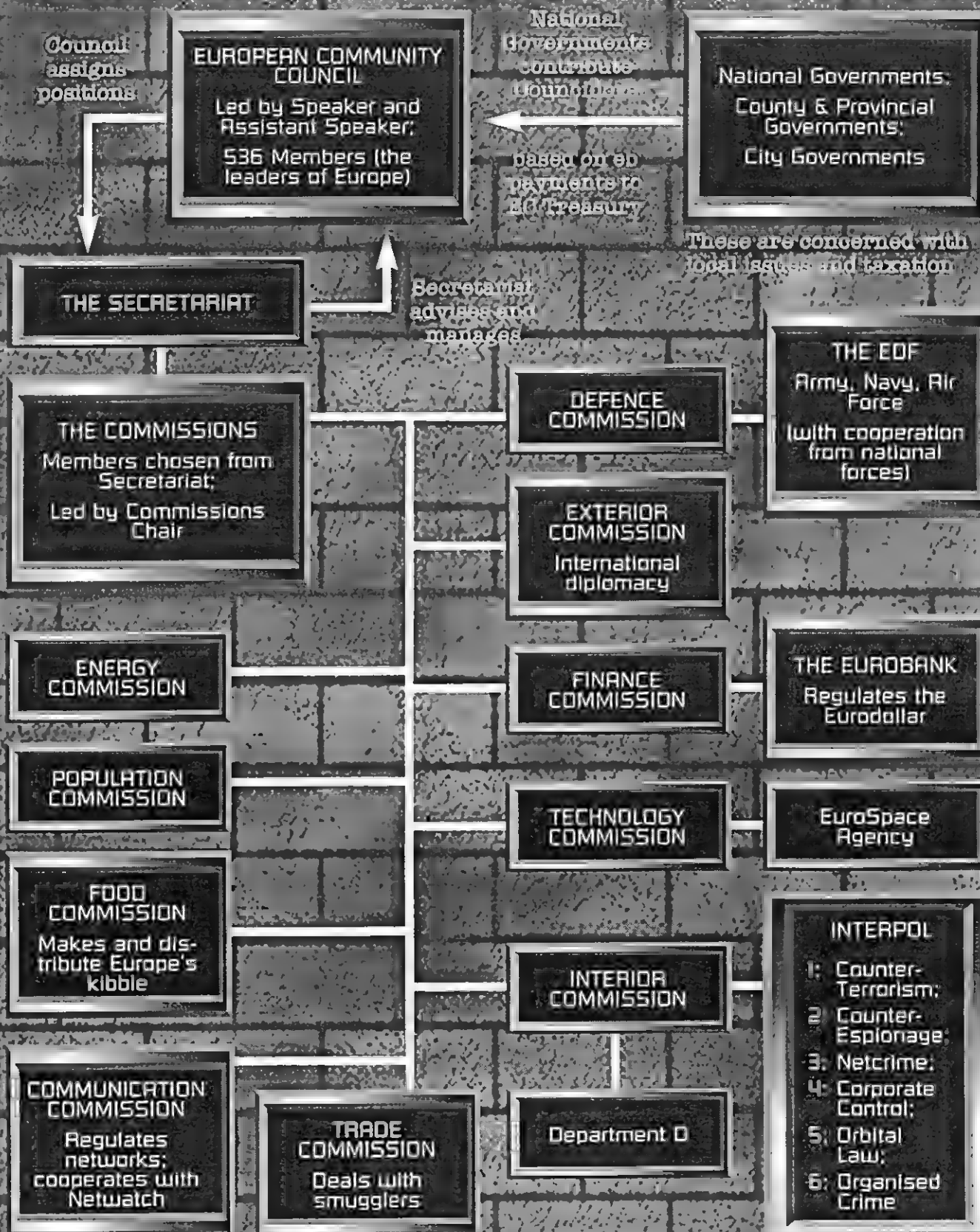
CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor; DataTerm Link; Interface Plugs; Toxin Binders; 2MU Wetdrive with Access Link

Alexander is a (stereo-)typical Finance Commission auditor. An accountant from hell. He specialises in corporate audits, usually spending a whole week on an assignment. His working day follows a strict routine: up at 0515, exercise, shower, dress, breakfast at 0630; at 0700 five bodyguards escort him to his assignment (victim), en route he phones his wife if not at home; during work he divides his time between checking the accounts and subtly interviewing the personnel there, lunch break at 1230 to 1315, stops work at precisely 1630; escorted back; dinner between 1900 and 2000, goes to bed at 2130.

At home he is a fairly typical father. He takes his sons on hikes in the Black Forest and does a lot of his own home improvements. He is a very likeable person and gets on with most people, even many of his targets like him, before they get the results of his report.



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE





put in excess of 20,000 eurodollars, and a random sampling of those with less value. Their audits are predominantly to search for tax infringements but there are constant rumours that they also use these visits to search for financial irregularities such as black ops accounts. Auditors can call in full investigation teams from Interpol if they feel the target requires further checking. Commission auditors are often called in by Interpol to help them with their cases. Financial data is often enough to arrest smugglers and traffickers. Often fraud and/or tax evasion charges will be brought against criminals on top (or instead) of the charges Interpol were seeking to bring against them.

Finance Commission staff tend to be highly intelligent, well educated, and are highly motivated. Auditors and inspectors are educated to masters degree level at least, although many enter the commission as junior clerks and work their way up while studying in their spare time.

Auditors and inspectors are selected partially for their dedication to duty. They are paid obscenely large salaries to reduce the chance of bribery. They live in well guarded facilities to prevent blackmail and coercion attempts using their immediate families.

The finance commission retains a large number of security personnel. Many are for site and transport security. The rest are investigation security, effectively the auditors and inspectors' bodyguards, some of their investigations can get a little rough.

Eurobank

The Eurobank is the most powerful financial institution in the world, the entire planet's finances are dependant on it. It controls the eurodollar that the value of every other currency in the world is based on and all international transactions use.

The eurodollar is so close to being the world-wide currency, the only thing preventing it happening is national pride in non-EC countries. There again the same problem slowed the acceptance of the eurodollar in the EC after it was founded. The world is getting smaller all the time, people regularly work in many countries these days and this is making salary payments very tricky, an employee paid in US dollars may find things a little too expensive while working in Tokyo for example. As time goes on corporations, and even governments, will find that the only way to convince their employees they have a stable salary is to pay them in euro. Within the next twenty to thirty years national currencies should just fade out from use and be replaced by the euro, which will probably be renamed the worlddollar, terrabuck, or something equally neutral sometime soon.

The Eurobank reserves are stored in the mountains between Freilassing and Salzburg in the strongest vaults on the planet. The entrance is precisely on the old border between Germany and Austria. The reserves hold not only the traditional rare metals and metals, but also valuable patents, property deeds, and other items. It is also rumoured that the vaults con-

tain blackmail information that the secretariat keeps on various groups and individuals.

For investors the bank offers Eurobonds. These are sold for values in multiples of a thousand eurodollars at fixed interest rates (usually one percent over the current bank interest rate) with repayment at the end of a specified term, usually multiples of five years.

INTERIOR COMMISSION

The Interior Commission is responsible for conditions within Europe. Their primary consideration is law and order. They also control access to Europe, and are largely responsible for ensuring that member states follow the Council's directives. The Interior Commission also has the fun and exiting job of making the states and populace of Europe aware of EC directives and how they will affect them. They are ultimately responsible for ensuring that every EC citizen has at least a specified minimum quality of life.

Over the past ten years they have changed the focus of their endeavours to improving conditions in the hope this will reduce the amount of stress, generally improve people's feelings and hopefully reduce crime in the community.

This commitment to environmental effects doesn't come cheap or easy. Whole suburbs have been emptied, destroyed and replaced by better designed buildings and better streets. People living in troublesome areas are often (forcibly if necessary) moved to other areas where they will be given make-work jobs to give them a reason to stay.

Huge amounts of money have been sunk into transport. Maglev trains link all the major cities and electric trains criss-cross the continent. The trains have been continually upgraded and improved. All main lines run high speed express trains and it is not uncommon to find people commuting hundreds of kilometres daily to different countries.

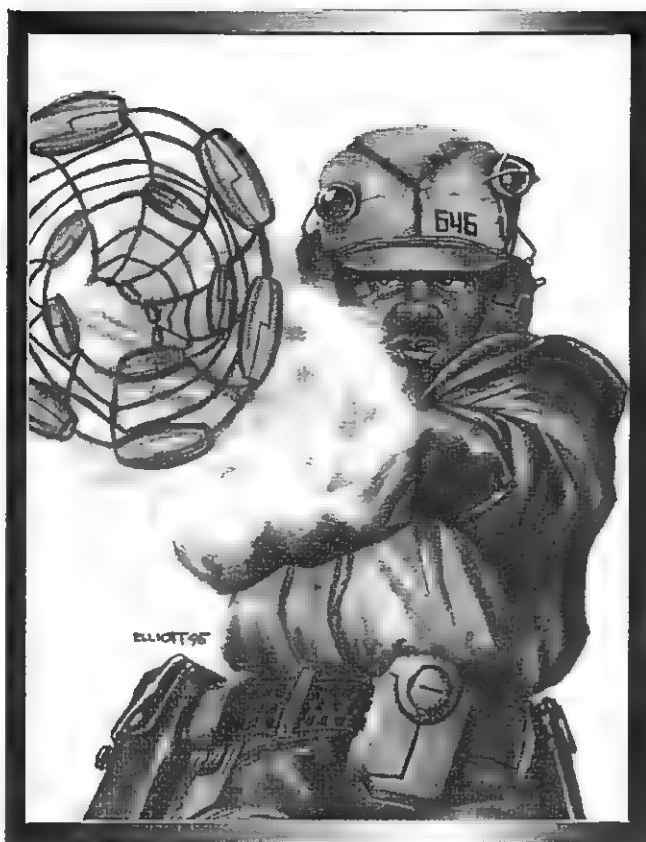
The Interior Commission's duties regarding member states following EC rulings are very sensitive. Member states are punished for infringements by cutting their area development grants. This leads to local pressure against those infringing on the rules. The most effective cases of this policy are in the South of Europe where the countries are poorer. It has been used with great effect whenever states like Spain or Italy try to make it more difficult for other states or citizens to operate freely within their borders.

The Interior Commission is also responsible for controlling European citizenship. They issue and monitor citizenship papers, ID cards as well as PACs.

Department D

Department D of the Interior Commission has the responsibility of guarding EC property. They are primarily concerned with building security. A separate branch of the department is responsible for the protection of European Councillors and members of the Secretariat.





INTERPOL

Interpol was intended to be the International Police Force of the world. It didn't catch on in many countries though and is more accurately the European police force.

Interpol deals with crimes that do not fall within the bounds of national law or crimes that involve European law. Its main powers lie in its independence from national needs and politics and the exceptionally high quality of its agents.

The main Interpol administrative centre is the 'Pyramid' near Berlin. It is home to most of Interpol's admin. staff and is also the home of its central datafortress. The 'Grid' started as a database on crimes and criminals with a complex communications link to make this information available to agents, it has since developed to a fully fledged private net that is only accessible to the main net through the pyramid datafortress.

The 'pyramid' itself is a highly advanced building that has its shape taken from the pyramid of Cheops. The bottom floors are public areas where press conferences are held, people can apply for work in Interpol or rat on their friends, and buy souvenirs. The higher the level of authority in Interpol, the higher up in the Pyramid the office. Obviously there is much less office space per floor near the top than there is at the bottom so there's a lot of prestige goes with getting an office up there. The architect, through an unusual accident, placed the computer

department's mainframes in the same position as the pharaoh's tomb in the original.

The active units of Interpol are broken down into six separate directorates. Field agents tend to remain with the directorate they are first assigned to. Occasionally a field agent is promoted to the senior ranks, at this stage they can choose whether to stay in their directorate or move into admin.

I-1: Counter-Terrorism

Formed to combat the biggest public worry at the time. Originally used to perform actual raids themselves, but now has more of an intelligence role, the army having taken over the actual raids.

When the directorate was originally formed the major threat was externally sponsored terrorist groups being used to destabilise Europe. This threat still exists, though to a much lesser extent, with corporate sponsored terrorism and separatist groups added to make it more interesting.

Since the army took over the actual raids the main function of the directorate has changed to what was always their speciality: gathering information on and getting agents into terrorist groups. They work very closely with the army COUs when action is needed, often co-ordinating the timing of multiple attacks.

The 1st directorate still has a large force of, effectively, combat troops at its disposal. These are used for off the cuff missions when there isn't time to arrange army intervention. They are also available for use by the other directorates, their anti-terrorist training comes in very useful when dealing with desperate criminals, or raiding corporate buildings.

I-2: Counter-Espionage

This was originally formed to deal with spies from foreign nations and now has to deal with corporations as well. The 2nd directorate also has espionage functions of its own.

The primary thrust of their work is to keep European information in Europe. To do that they keep an eye on people working with sensitive information. Bank accounts are monitored for unusual transactions. Workers and managers are expected to keep an eye on one another and report anything suspicious.

Foreign nationals, workers for foreign corporations, and people that spend a fair amount of time outside Europe are also heavily monitored. These people may find themselves the lucky recipients of a random tail. Random tails monitor their target's every action for a week. Every little detail is entered into the Grid where the directorate's AI and coincidence programs continually scan for details that could indicate suspicious behaviour.

The espionage group mainly work by traditional methods. They subtly insinuate themselves into their target group or organisation, using Interpol's power and connections where necessary to further their way up the chain of command. Once an agent is in place Interpol does everything in its power to keep their cover intact. Occasionally even the covers of junior Interpol counter-



espionage are sacrificed to enhance the careers of agents working their way into foreign intelligence agencies.

The long running tension between Europe and the US has led to them being the main target of the espionage group. It is rumoured that over ten percent of the senior US military and intelligence officers are actually Interpol agents, though this figure is probably an exaggeration. Given the massive difference between the military power of the US and the EC the directorate is probably the only advantage the EC would have in a war between them.

2nd directorate agents are universally considered to be the best in their field. Their training and equipment is the best available. Some of their agents are highly cybered with more electronics in their bodies than a small broadcasting station. As well as commonly available cyberware they also have a development centre of their own purely to keep them one step ahead of the rest.

I-3: Netcrime

Originally formed to deal with computer fraud the 3rd directorate now concentrates heavily on netcrime of all kinds. It's jurisdiction is very limited though, they may only react to crimes that may affect the EC or EC property. Stopping illegal netrunning is up to Netwatch.

This directorate struggled for a long time. The practice of hiring graduates and training them in the arts of netrunning was unsuccessful. Far too often they were embarrassed by 'runners who just plain refused to work by the book, running rings around the Interpol runners. There was even the terminal embarrassment of having a 'runner break into the Pyramid datafortress, he got into the Grid before he was forced to leave.

Lately they have changed to a 'set a thief to catch a thief' policy. Netrunners caught breaking the law are given the option to work for Interpol instead of facing the (exceptionally heavy) penalties. This has brought a large number of younger, less hide-bound talent into the directorate although they often need to be

carefully watched for a while. Most of these new 'runners work ridiculously long hours from the sheer enjoyment of the amount of power and the quality equipment they get to play with.

Their 'runners are also called on to support Interpol teams in other operations, often getting to 'play the bad guy' and break into datafortresses, just like many did before they were caught.

I-4: Corporations

The corporate directorate, designed to monitor corporations that operate in Europe. Their main focus is to deal with corporations attempting to use their power to bypass the law.

Officially they are only supposed to prevent corporations from avoiding or abusing European Law. Often they tend to treat this a little more flexibly, building up evidence of minor infringements to use against the corporation when they see a need for it's 'co-operation'.

Most of their work is purely information gathering and monitoring. They keep an eye on which corp. is doing what to the other corps and step in when it seems to be good time to prevent outside forces from getting too much power in Europe.

They also get to deal with benefit fraud, people attempting to skim more than their due from the community. Usually this is left to the local police, but there have been occasions where large groups have been found working together to defraud the state.

I-5: Orbital Control

Responsible for all facets of law enforcement in space, their work is complicated by the number of different national interests in orbit.

Recently most orbit capable nations have given in to pressure put on them by the media. They have allowed Interpol jurisdiction over their off planet interests, thanks to the successes of joint Interpol and Soviet Sovereign Republics (Neo-SSR) operations.

The only nation that still insists on keeping Interpol out of it's orbitals is the US. This doesn't endear them with Europe, the ESA especially, who are expecting the US to start a war any day now.

DIRECTIVE 1998 - EC - A - 000534

From the 13th May 1998 no EC citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, religion, or any other reason.

DIRECTIVE 2003 - EC - A - 001348

From the 1st January 2005 all member states shall provide adequate education to all EC citizens living within their boundaries.

Adequate education requires a minimum of six years non specialised (general) education and four years specific or advanced education or vocational training.

All citizens shall attend school by the age of six. They shall not be permitted to leave schooling prior to the age of sixteen unless they have already achieved competence in the basics of education. the required competence levels will be released by the Interior Commission each year. They will require at least a minimum level of ability in the following skills: reading, writing, mathematics, native language, English, System Knowledge.

Citizens with the resources to afford it shall be charged a standard rate, as set by the Interior Commission for their children's education.

DIRECTIVE 2009 - EC - A - 000039

From the 13th May 2009 all member states shall provide housing and clothing to EC citizens and residents should they need it.

Housing shall comprise a minimum of a sleeping area and a securable container for personal belongings. Housing shall protect the residents from the elements. Families shall not be broken up into separate accommodations without their explicit permission.

Clothing shall comprise a minimum of the necessary clothing to protect the wearer from the effects of the elements.

Citizens or residents requesting this aid shall be charged the current basic charge, as approved by the European Community, if they have the resources to afford it.



I-6: Organized Crime

The newest directorate, the 6th is an off-shoot from the 4th focused on dealing with organised and multinational crime. It was created in 2018 once it was realised that organised crime was a multinational business, in many ways similar to a corporation. A concerted European effort seemed to have more chance of success than a purely national one.

Most of the agents were transferred from the 4th directorate with others brought in from the 1st and national police forces.

They target smugglers and traffickers of all kinds: drugs, weapons, bodies (live and dead), food, money, etc. Cutting into their transport routes was seen to be the easiest way to hurt their profits. To this end the directorate has invested in monitoring equipment, boats and planes. They also work closely with the European Defence Force, often calling for support from the navy and air force.

They also work very closely with the Mediterranean Patrols. There is very little difference between stopping smugglers bringing cheap drugs into Europe and smugglers bringing illegal aliens in. Their aims overlap so much it is only a matter of time before the patrols are merged with the directorate. The main bone of contention at the moment seems to be disagreement about the best way to deal with infringements. The patrols are notoriously savage whereas the directorate are less bloodthirsty in their approach, preferring to arrest rather than just shoot on sight.

Although still a new directorate they've had some good successes. A large amount of this success is surely due to their being new and keen, but they're expected to reduce the profitability of crime enough to cut it back a little.

TRADE COMMISSION

This Commission has the job of balancing out Europe's trade. It's essential to Europe's long term viability that European goods are exported to the rest of the world. It's just as important that Europe imports goods from the countries it exports to, otherwise they won't be able to afford to buy more European goods.

Usually it's just a case of keeping an eye on Europe's trading partners and making sure their economies aren't grinding to a halt. Getting European corporations to invest in trading partners is often the only way to ensure they have enough cash to pay for their imports, of course this also helps spread Europe's influence.

It's not always so easy, often they have to arrange triangular deals where one partner sells to another that Europe buys from.

The Trade Commission also checks that prices being charged for goods are equivalent, regardless of the country. They fight hard against excessively high import tariffs placed on European goods, and even more against countries that sell their goods cheap in Europe just to get into the market.

Smuggling

The biggest bane of the Trade Commission. Vast amounts of legitimate European trade is lost due to smuggling, so much so

that the Trade Commission spent huge amounts of time and energy getting Interpol to form the 6th directive.

The biggest factor regarding smuggling has been the effects of global warming. Much of Europe's coastline is heavily developed and no-one was overly happy at the thought of losing their homes as the seas rose. Sea walls were built to protect land that was in danger of being claimed by the sea. The sea walls have provided many extra landing points for smugglers, all they have to do is pull up against the wall and goods can be moved in and out of Europe easily.

EXTERIOR COMMISSION

The Exterior Commission is Europe's diplomatic corps. They man the embassies and consulates around the world, and are the visible face of Europe wherever you are.

It is their duty to keep relations cordial at least with other countries and trading groups. It is seen as their failure if relations break down to the point where outsiders are hostile to the community. They also spend time trying to improve relations with the other groups.

The vast majority of their time is spent working with the civil servants and diplomatic corps of other countries smoothing over minor disagreements and problems. The various diplomatic corps tend to know each other well as they not only work together, but also spend a lot of their spare time together. This means that many problems are dealt with informally.

External Relationships

In general Europe currently has fairly good relationships with most of the world. Notable points:

New Central Europe

Relations with Eastern Europe and the Union of Sovereign Soviet Republics are improving. Unfortunately Europe still sees Eastern Europe as backwards cousins only good as a source of cheap land and labour. Many foreigners take the EC's behaviour in NCE as a sign of their intention to form a European empire - the Earth. This isn't helped by Germany's support for General Skroup in Czechoslovakia, although the EC does not (officially) agree with them in this.

North Africa & the Middle East

In general Europe gets on well with the members of the Pan-African Confederation (PAO) and not so well with the Free Africa foundation (FAF). The PAC states feel their best way up in the world is to join with the EC and use it's power and influence to help them. The FAF states feel that Europe is trying to rebuild it's empires of the past and are fighting for their freedom before it happens.

Large numbers of people from these areas are continually trying to move to Europe both legally and illegally. These are generally dealt with by the Turkish and Greek armies and the



Mediterranean Patrol. The patrols have the reputation of being the most savage units in Europe and are often in combat with pirate fleets attempting to smuggle would be immigrants across the Mediterranean. There is a lot of stress between Europe and her neighbours because of the treatment of these migrants. Europe has tried to bolster the local economies of these neighbours, but these initiatives haven't helped alleviate the situation.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is highly linked to Europe and relationships are generally very good. The ESA sites in the region have massively boosted the economies and technology levels of the equatorial belt while the ESA hireout reduced population levels thus increasing average wealth even more. Most citizens of the area feel they owe Europe a great deal.

Southern Africa

Relations in the chaos of Southern Africa are hard to define. It's often impossible to be on good terms with one country or tribe without being immediately the enemy of their neighbour. Often Europe deals with these small states on the basis of it's individual countries instead of on a Community basis, this allows Europe to have some influence with implacable enemies.

North America

The most sensitive relationships are those in North America. Europe is traditionally friendly with Canada, and to a far lesser extent Mexico, and was for a long time the US's staunchest ally.

After the stock market crash and the withdrawal of the US from NATO relationships cooled drastically. They have been teetering constantly since. The Gang of Four set Europe up as the US's enemy for many years, using jealousy of the better conditions in Europe to give US citizens someone other than them to blame for their misery. Recently the biggest problem between the US and Europe has been control of orbital and off-planet colonies. The ESA is currently the biggest off-planet power and the US military seems to be very jealous of this.

Europe has many problems dealing with the US at present. Some sections seem to want them to work together, others compete almost to a state of open warfare.

South America

Europe has a strange relationship with most South American countries. In a way it feels responsible for them as Europeans colonised them, on the other hand it can't stand many of their policies such as on human rights and drugs.

Asia

Generally Europe has a normal, competitive relationship with the countries of the Pacific Rim. The bureaucracies and diplomats of

Europe clash daily with those of the old Asian cultures in a no holds barred fight for the world's markets. These are probably the neatest of Europe's relationships, everyone knows where they stand and fairly well how to work with one another.

DEFENCE COMMISSION (EDF)

The Defence Commission is responsible for the protection of Europe as a whole. All nations within Europe retain their own defence forces, organised along their traditional lines, though these are getting smaller all the time. There is no longer any national service as there are more than enough unemployed willing to sign up for regular salaries with good quality food and board. The Defence Commission co-ordinates work between the national defence forces and the European Defence Force.

Of course some national defence forces are more powerful than others. The British armed forces are massive for the population of the country, but they're in a state of martial law which explains it. The French also have large armed forces, partly to help reduce their unemployment levels and partly because they like having things like aircraft carriers and nuclear subs around, it makes them feel like a superpower.

Originally the European Defence Force was formed by taking front line units from all countries in Europe and then merging them to create multinational units. Other units were borrowed on a rotational basis, serving in the EDF for a year or two at a time. Many of the troops transferred to the EDF during these loan periods. Gradually the EDF grew by absorbing experienced troops from the national forces. At the same time the national forces in most countries were being reduced as it became harder for politicians to justify their existence.

In 2015 the EDF started recruiting it's own personnel directly. Requirements and Salaries were intentionally set high in order to attract the best people available. Gradually those already in the EDF that don't make the newer minimum requirements have been weeded out from front line duty and transferred to support or internal security positions.

In 2019 the EDF opened it's own officer training camps. There are three of these multifunctional camps, which have facilities for all four corps, one each in Spain, Germany, and Turkey. Trainee officers, and officers brought in from national forces, are sent to a base in a different cultural region to their origin for training in order to help them take a wider European view of their work. While in training they will often work with trainees from the other corps in multi-discipline exercises. Officers are routinely transferred to other units within their corps and are also expected to spend time in the other corps before being promoted to the higher ranks.

The EDF has specialised in small, fast hitting units. Most are highly specialised and all have trained with other corps in the forces. There are no specific marine forces for example, just army units that have spent time working with the navy and have trained in amphibious operations. The EDF does not expect to



have to deal with a major invasion and mainly leaves that sort of combat training to the national forces.

The military hierarchy does not make distinctions between the corps at the higher levels. High level officers are not limited by corps and may be called upon to command troops from any of the corps. The idea is to reduce the tensions and conflicts between the various corps so the EDF works as a coherent whole. So far it seems to have worked.

EDF Army

These are the ground forces of the EDF. The army provides both normal mechanised forces and specialised strike troops. The normal forces are standard infantry, armoured troops and ACPA troops. The strike troops vary from assault ACPA units to the elite Covert Operation Units.

The main functions of the army are protection of Community assets; the prevention of attacks on European soil; and the destruction of enemy forces. Mainly this means combating terrorism and dealing with foreign or corporate covert units. Currently the army has 260,000 personnel, of which 230,000 are front line troops; 4,000 armoured vehicles (mainly tracked and hover); and 3 800 ACPAs.

The Covert Operation Units are the top units of the army. They are occasionally used as rapid response strike teams, but their speciality is undercover missions. They are trained to blend into the populace in any area, their presence in an area usually only becoming apparent when they burst into action. Their most spectacular successes have been in anti-terrorist work where they are often in the area before the terrorists and allow themselves to be taken as hostages so they can act from inside the terrorist's defences. Many of the COU troops are highly cybered but there's no sign of chrome on them, subtlety is the name of their game.

The army is beginning to win the political battle between it and Interpol for jurisdiction over terrorism. The efficiency and popularity of the COUs has reduced support for the 1st Directorate of Interpol to perform raids or attacks.

EDF Navy

The European Navy's functions are to protect Europe's coastal borders, patrol her waters; and protect her shipping. They also provide seaborne transport for personnel and materiel. Mainly this is performed by large numbers of heavily armed fast patrol boats. The fast patrol boats are supported by modern, high speed multi-task frigates armed with rail guns.

The EN also has quite a large number of submarines. Some are leftovers from the last century, designed to play hunter killer with other large subs. Most are more modern, smaller subs designed primarily for patrol work and small team insertion. They also have a lot of sub freighters for resupply duty. Rumour has it they've got some old ICBM subs stashed away, but what they would want those old dinosaurs for is anyone's guess.

For amphibious and coastal assault missions the EN has twelve large assault carriers. These large ships mount railguns and missiles for defence and carry hundreds of troops, their AVs, and support equipment.

Currently the navy has 78 000 personnel; 324 small surface vessels (mainly fast patrol boats); 95 large surface vessels; 160 subs (95 are transports); and 65 underwater ACPAs.

EDF Air Force

The European Air Force provides all the atmospheric air support required by the EDF. The EAF's functions are to provide air superiority, strike, and transport.

With the exception of air superiority they are usually involved in combined arms missions with the army or navy. They also occasionally work with the ESA, usually pursuing smugglers' deltas while in atmosphere. Currently the air force has 59,000 troops with 1,300 AVs; 420 Fighters; 720 helicopters and 500 other planes (mainly transports and trainers). They also have a new branch with 20 deltas (more on order) to help support the ESA.

The EAF are most visible on those combined arms missions with the Army anti-terrorist squads which involve high speed AVs, missiles, and ACPA troopers.

EDF Medical

The European Medical Corps provide medical support to the EDF. They are also often called to deal with disasters and emergencies.

The majority of the EMC are based at hospitals and in quick response field hospital units. The rest are seconded to front line combat units, there is at least one EMC trooper with every army unit and on every naval vessel. EMC troopers based with other units have cross-trained with the corps they will be working with and are fully competent in that unit's functions as well as their medical duties.

The medical corps now has 13,000 personnel with 1,600 vehicles (mainly ambulances) and 250 ACPAs for use in exceptionally dangerous environments.

EDF Procurement

Equipment for the EDF is bought by the central defence commission bureaucracy. In theory they buy the best equipment available for the EDF's needs. In practice they tend to balance out cost considerations as well as the country of origin. The EDF is still a little worried that they may purchase equipment from a potential enemy and find support for it difficult.

When new equipment is being developed for the EDF it is first designed by the Weapons Design Team in Brussels, an autonomous branch of the EDF. Module building is then spread around the EC (after a lot of lobbying from all countries) and final construction done at one or two lucky sites.



NPC DOSSIER

NAME: GENERAL JÜRGEN VOGEL
ROLE: CORPORATE (EDF BRASS)

INT: 8 **REF:** 7 **TECH:** 6
COOL: 8 **ATTR:** 4 **LUCK:** 6
MA: 6 **BODY:** 7 **EMP:** 6/4
AGE: 58 **BTM:** -2

SKILLS: Resources +10, Personal Grooming +6, Wardrobe & Style +5, Human Perception +6, Interview +5, Leadership +8, Social +6, Awareness +7, Compose +3, Education +6, Expert (strategy) +7, Expert (tactics) +5, Dance +3, Fencing +5, Handgun +6, Melee +5, Rifle +4

CYBERWARE: Neuralware processor; Interface Plugs; Smartgun Link; Cyberoptic (R) with Times Square, Anti-Dazzle, Teleoptics

Son of an army colonel, Gen. Vogel grew up in a traditional military family. After school he joined the Bundeswehr as a trainee officer. He had a distinguished career, specialising in special forces unit actions. He was transferred to the EDF in 2006, taking control of it in 2012.

Gen. Vogel has strong family connections in German industry which he finds useful when dealing with contractors. His strong sense of honour has prevented him from abusing his position to the same extent most of the secretariat have, though his lifestyle is luxurious. He has brought up his family very much the way he was brought up, one of his sons is currently serving in the Bundeswehr, the other in the EDF.

He is a very dedicated man, he's worked his way to the top and won't let go easily.

EDF General Jürgen Vogel

The longest serving of the current commissioners, Gen. Vogel has the respect of the public as well as the Council. He often takes personal charge of high-profile operations preferring his neck to be on the line than that of one of his junior officers. In many countries he is regarded as a hero after some stunningly successful anti-terrorist operations.

He is disliked by many in the Secretariat for not 'playing the game'. They are unwilling to do anything to remove him since the unfortunate demise of the last person to try. Daniel Galley, the trade commissioner, was killed during an anti-terrorist raid less than a week after accusing Vogel of incompetence and suggesting the Council should have him replaced.

TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION

The Technology Commission is responsible for keeping Europe's technology up with the rest of the world, preferably in front, of course. The Technology Commission is the only commission that makes a profit thanks to the ESA.

The commission has two major sources of development: they put a lot of support (and money) into universities and colleges that undertake research work, and they offer large research grants for companies that have promising ideas. Of course they sometimes receive hints and ideas from various Interpol directorates, but they would never condone espionage or intellectual property theft.

The commission is broken into three sections: general, transport and military. The general section is a catch all section that covers anything that's not covered by the other sections. They sponsor everything from food and clothing research to advanced building designs. They are not overly interested in cyberware research, though the military section is, but they do support a lot of research into genetics.

The transport section is primarily interested in designing cheap, environmentally friendly transportation to keep Europe's population moving. Currently a lot of their work is going in to urban transportation methods, they would like to remove all private ground vehicles from city centres in the next twenty years.

The military section arranges development work for the EDF and Interpol. Very little information is available about current development work.

⇨ STRATEGIC BALANCE

The ESA has massdrivers. The USA has inter-continental missile subs. The USSR most probably have some old ICBMs. All these weapons are effectively pointless.

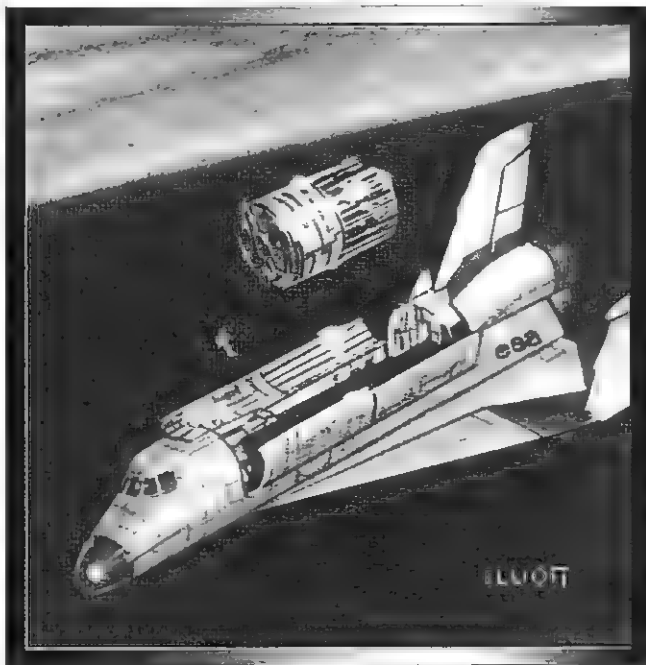
Missiles will be shot down by satellites, deltas and ground-based laser arrays or maser generators. Even if they get through, they will have less effect than a small vial of biowar material.

Massdrivers are a vulnerable target—any space-capable groups can take them out with a solid attack.

But these weapons make people feel good. It's a legacy of the Cold War that governments spread fear of others so they can show how much they're doing to protect their people. As long as the general populace know that 'their side' has a big stick that can hit any 'other side,' they feel less exposed.

—Steve Berry, Jane's Military Analysis





The EuroSpace Agency

The ESA is the world's largest and most advanced space faring organisation. They control the lion's share of all space related activity. There has been a lot of stress and conflict over the ESA's power in orbit, but this has been reduced a little by more joint projects with the Neo-SSR and JAB (the Japanese Aerospace Bureau).

The ESA has lost some of it's technological lead over the other space powers, especially the Japanese, in recent years. This is an embarrassment to the Technology Commission, but is probably going to lead to more stability in orbit in the long run.

The agency is very worried by the aggressive US stance in orbit tied with the loss of their technological lead. They have recently become more interested in construction of military vessels than they were before and have started the construction of gunships to counter the possible threat from the US's military vessels.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

The Communication Commission is responsible for all non-physical communications within the EC.

The main communications medium in the EC is the net. Not only is it used for passing data as in the rest of the world, it is also used for public mail (through e-mail), phones, and vid transmission, these are all just forms of data transmission after all. Every home has a standard socket that links it to the fibre optic web that is the physical aspect of the net in Europe. This socket is used for the TV, phone, mail node and all other legitimate data transfers to and from the home.

Confidential messages use scrambled radio and microwave links to keep them away from the net and possible interception.

DIRECTIVE 2017 - EC - A - 001021

From the 12th May 2018 all member states shall ensure that all EC citizens have access to a communications port.

Communications ports shall be provided free of charge to all homes, businesses and dwellings. This is to ensure that all EC citizens have access to e-mail and don't have to depend on physical mail for communication with the outside world.

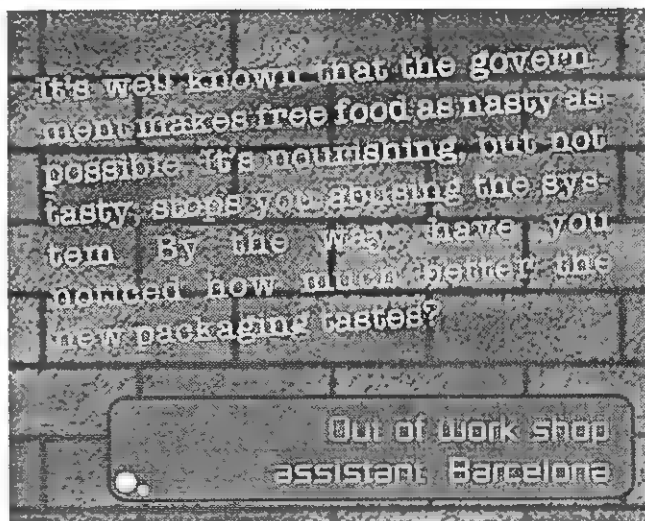
POPULATION COMMISSION

The Population Commission has the task of ensuring that the EC's population doesn't exceed Europe's ability to support it. It also has the task of making sure that the population is in the right areas for the further development of the EC.

The main problem in the EC at the moment is a lack of population growth. The wasting plague killed millions of Europeans and numbers haven't risen much since. This is very perplexing to the experts who expected the population to shoot up afterwards. The plague itself mainly affected the elderly and the poor who could not afford adequate medical treatment.

In most countries there is still a steady decrease in the population. This is thought to be a hold over from last century when population pressures caused most countries to introduce public campaigns to reduce the population. This is causing problems in Europe as the average age of the population is steadily rising again. More and more of the population are becoming dependant on the state.

More importantly massive splits are forming between the old and the young. Indeed as the younger sections of some areas leave them for areas with better employment opportunities the elderly can become the predominant group with total control over local government.



Food Commission

The Food Commission is responsible for making sure that there is enough food for the EC's population. They also monitor food manufacture and distribution. The commission has control of many of the 'artificial' food supplies, they are the biggest yeast farmers and kibble manufacturers in Europe. The commission also has charge over fresh water supplies and water processing plants in the community.

The Food Commission is probably the least efficient of all the commissions. They have not managed to work their way around the mass of local politics that is the agricultural business in Europe, especially in the West and South. Their biggest weapons are quotas and subsidies; these change every year in an attempt to stabilise food supplies.

SURPLUSES AND SHORTAGES

The EC has unusual problems with it's food. From year to year they have huge shortages and surpluses. You can virtually guarantee that this year's shortage is next year's surplus. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, food production is not an instant thing. It needs to be planned in advance: crops planted, stock bred etc. before you can use it. Food producers tend to react to what is profitable. If there is a shortage of beef this year, more suppliers will be rearing cows next year.

Secondly, people tend to adapt their diets to what is available and affordable. If there is a shortage of beef but lamb is cheap and plentiful, people will eat more lamb. Given the example above, next year there will be more beef available, but less people want it. Voila! instant beef surplus.

Luxury foods tend to always be in good supply, if you can afford them.

Energy Commission

The Energy Commission tries to ensure that there is enough energy for the EC's needs. They are not only responsible for electricity, but also fossil fuels and vegetable-based fuels.

DIRECTIVE 2002 - EC - A - 000306

From the 20th December, 2003 all member states shall provide minimum nutritional requirements to EC citizens and residents should they need it.

Nutrition will be provided in a digestible form. It will be available twenty four hours a day in communities with a population greater than 25 000. It will be available twelve hours a day (times to be openly displayed) in communities with a population greater than 5 000. In smaller communities it will be available three times a day for at least one hour, times to be similar to the most common meal times in the area.

Electricity by far and away the main type of power used in Europe, and they use a lot of it. The majority of electricity generators are directly controlled by the commission. Europe has invested in every form of electricity generator that has even a remote chance of working: nuclear, wind, wave, solar, microwave from orbit; you name it, they've tried it. In theory Europe now produces enough power for it's current needs.

SHORTAGES AND GETTING IT AROUND

Even with the massive amounts of power generated in Europe, there are still brownouts, dribble-downs and cuts occasionally.

The biggest problems seem to be distribution and sudden demand changes. The power distribution network in Europe is exceptionally complex, as it contains many old, disparate, national networks, and can often be very slow to react to sudden changes in demand for power.

Funnily enough it's usually the poorer areas that suffer when there's a power shortage. The more upmarket suburbs rarely suffer from brownouts, even though they're the ones who usually have their own back up generators.

Another cause of problems with power distribution is terrorism. Those nice, big power lines tend to make nice targets for anyone with a grudge.

→ EASIES

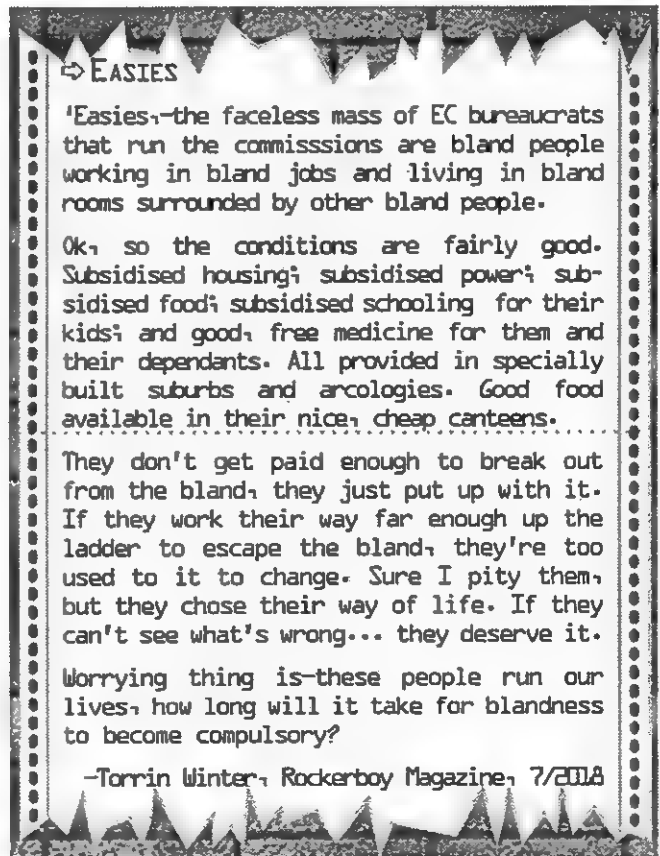
'Easies'-the faceless mass of EC bureaucrats that run the commissions are bland people working in bland jobs and living in bland rooms surrounded by other bland people.

Ok, so the conditions are fairly good. Subsidised housing; subsidised power; subsidised food; subsidised schooling for their kids; and good, free medicine for them and their dependants. All provided in specially built suburbs and arcologies. Good food available in their nice, cheap canteens.....

They don't get paid enough to break out from the bland, they just put up with it. If they work their way far enough up the ladder to escape the bland, they're too used to it to change. Sure I pity them, but they chose their way of life. If they can't see what's wrong... they deserve it.

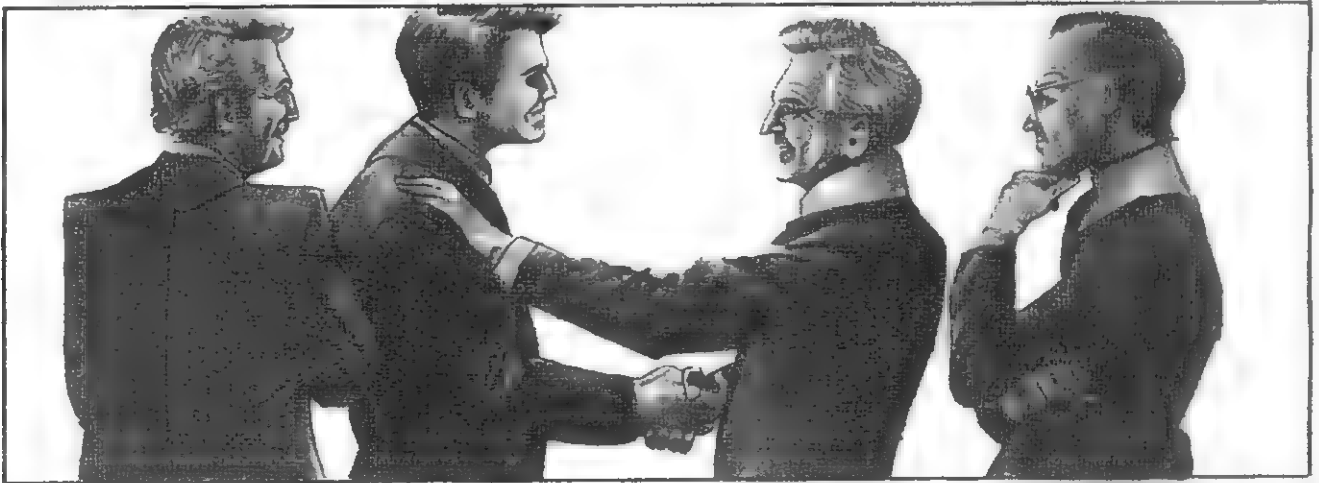
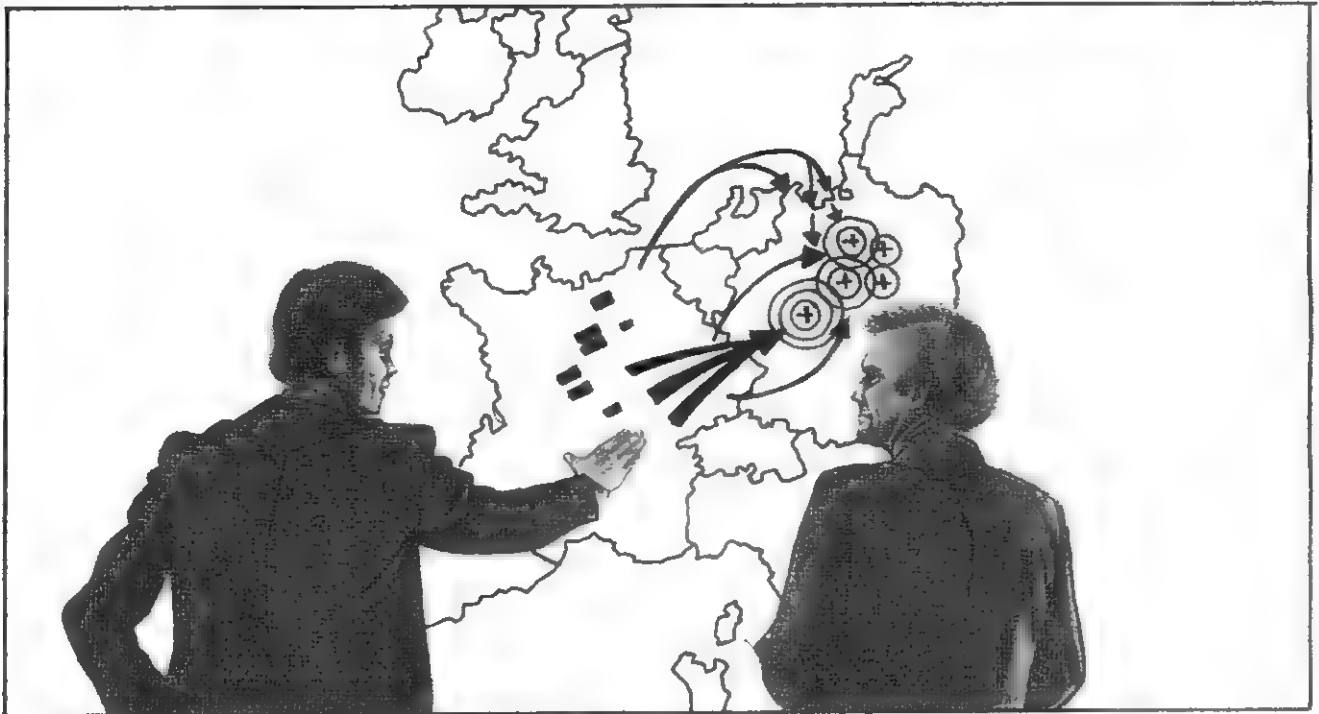
Worrying thing is-these people run our lives, how long will it take for blandness to become compulsory?

-Torin Winter, Rockerboy Magazine, 7/2008





THE MAJOR POWERS





Timeline of the Future Past: GREATER EUROPE

1990: The US-EEC "Quiet War" runs 1990-94. East & West Germany reunited. Breakup of the old USSR.

1991: ESA launches Hermes Spaceplane. Gorborev, Gorbachev's successor, purges last of old hardliners.

1992: EEC formed. Eurodollar established. DEA/Euro drug war; this is subsumed by the First Central American War.

EEC votes to uniform the currencies of the still-separate countries into the ecu (European Currency Unit), commonly known as the Eurodollar. During these councils the frame for individual currency's inflation, deflation etc, are set. The consequence is that only four nations are fit to join the ECU-union. They are Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Germany.

The core-nations of the ecu decide, against the resistance of the other european nations, to bring the ecu into existence. A period of economic turbulence follows in Europe, especially in France and GB. This results in labor uprisings and general rioting.

The four core countries set up a prototype Fortress Europe in violation of the EEC-treaty. Closing their borders to european laborers looking for work, they initiate a mass of illegal immigration. Most of these workers are quickly found and expelled.

High energy laser-lift array used in the USSR. Prototype mass-driver established on the moon by the ESA.

1993: TRC biologic interface chip developed in Munich. By now, all of the Western European nations except Italy and Portugal are ready for the ECU-Union.

The EC Ministry for Economics is founded, a structure to advance scientific progress and to set up the gov't of EEC for the confrontation with the rising megacorporations.

Interpol/Europol receives sanction to work outside EEC borders. They begin to recruit their future members from basic school, sending the candidates to exclusive schools and training camps.

1994: World stock markets crash, followed quickly by the U.S. economy. The EEC is not as hard hit as the rest of the world, due to internal trade. To be exact, many EEC-companies profit from the falling prices in other parts of the world.

A new wave of immigrants hit Europe's shores. EEC uses military to enforce its borders. In consequence, many refugees are killed.

A movement of human rights groups rises as word leaks out of the rigorous use of weapons. Some of these groups form terrorist cells to articulate their opinion.

After suffering from extensive strikes, President Walesa declares martial law in Poland.

1995: Kilimanjaro mass-driver begun by ESA and Pan African Alliance.

The EEC decides to implement the Fortress Europe system Europe-wide. Therefore, the surveillance-satellite program is initiated. One strategy to build up the fortress is a totalitarian id card system. The id cards are programmed with the individuals fingerprints, retina scans, dna prints, profession, health status and licenses. Many civil rights groups fear a "1984" scenario and react accordingly.

1996: After years of support, Portugal and Italy finally join the EEC.

1997: Mid-East Meltdown. In Europe, border skirmishes erupt as Greek troops try to stem the flow of Turkish refugees fleeing the spreading fallout of the nuclear exchange.

Hurricanes and spring tides hit Europe with unexpected force, leaving hundred thousands of people without shelter. The rising tides force the EEC to construct a system of dams that spans most of the coastal regions. The expected building time is ten years. Germany decides to abandon parts of its coastal regions.

A brief moment of fear strikes Europe when Germany is slow to pull its 10,000 man relief force out of flooded Gdansk.

1998: Drought. American food exports end. To stabilize the NCE Gov'ts, The EEC ships food into major East European cities.

Nights of Fire (KGB coup) in USSR. The Russian Mafia, supported by KGB splinter-groups, increases its efforts to expand into the EEC. This is countered by Europol, which starts a "Shadow War" against organized crime in foreign countries.

1999: Tycho colony established. Full-scale mass-driver completed. BASF, a large manufacturer in chemicals, gets broken up by the European Ministry for Economics. BASF tried to dictate prices of contracting firms. Such defiance cannot go unpunished.

2000: On Jan. 1st, the world's biggest rave in Berlin is disrupted when a Millenium Cult floods the area with combat gases. The final body count may be 19,000.

Some followers of millenium cults establish local sects, like the Austrian Werwolf and the French Revived Templars of the Sun.

Wasting Plague hits U.S. and Europe; millions die. Germany is especially hard hit. Cure designed at Bioweapons Lab at Neustrelitz, Brandenburg.

After the first cases of wasting plague are made known, the EEC closes its borders, finalizing the Fortress Europe. Most sociologists evaluate the plague as mainly positive due to the reduction in the elderly and poor population. The social care system is again capable of financing itself.

The ESA starts construction of the Crystal Palace.

EBM uses its political and economic power to buy up the drowning Hamburg municipal area over the next five years.



2001: The ID-card system comes into operation. Even the strongest opposition is defeated by vote, due to the mass of illegal immigrants in 2000. In addition, the surveillance satellite system is in working order. Still, immigrants are smuggled in through Greece and via submarines. Therefore, the council develops the plan of a killzone at their borders, akin to the former Berlin Wall. Later that year, after the destruction of an intruding nuclear submarine, the EEC Council orders the construction of several submarines capable of boarding incoming vessels.

2002: SovOil declares privatization. The Santorin volcano in the Aegean, erupts. Many islands hit hard by tidal waves.

2003: EEC weapons manufacturers make giant profits by selling arms to the South American governments.

The European Court of law decides that individual citizens can hold back their tax payments for up to three years, if there are significant grounds for suspicion of abuse of money by the government. In case the court rules against the prosecutor, the tax payment plus interest must be paid.

2004: First Corp War: EBM battles Orbital Air (over a dozen other Corps involved).

Killzone and Europe's submarine fleet is in working condition.

A major scandal occurs when the media documents the corruption in vast parts of the EEC structure. These reports lead to a general outcry of the populace and the refusal to pay taxes. In consequence, the council reforms the bureaucratic structure of the EEC.

2005: EBM, after buying the final tract of Hamburg, begins to build the Hamburg Wall. Peacefully, they declare Hamburg to be an independent nation in association with the EEC. Closely supervised by Europol, they divide the economic interests of EBM Corporation from the nation, EBM Hamburg.

2006: In preparation for the planned Euro/Sov mission to Mars, scientists begin experimenting with human genes. The goal of Operation "Green Man" is to create a human fit to colonize the red planet. The operation uses breeding and cloning techniques with an eye towards producing hardier and more intelligent humans.

2007: Second Corp War: SovOil vs. Petrochem. For the first time, national gov'ts openly back the corps. Greek gov't replaced by military coup d'état. Exile gov't sets up at Rhodes.

2008: US attacks Soviet space platform MIR XIII. ESA intervenes. Orbital war breaks out between Euros and Yanks; a rock is dropped on Colorado Springs.

Greece military gov't tries to annex Cyprus and Macedonia, failing in both.

2009: Euro-Sov mission to Mars departs. Abortive takeover attempt at Crystal Palace by US intelligence using a terrorist group as a cover. The ESA discovers the plan and drops a twelve ton rock off DC as a warning.

2010: Romania's south is hit by an earthquake. Bucharest is hit hard, burying 267 people under its concrete walls.

2011: Crystal Palace is completed, ESA controls High Orbit. ESA-Sov mission reaches Mars.

2012: First viable nanotech developed jointly by Euro & Japanese Labs.

Operation "Green Man" rocked when word of a living foetus leaks to the public. Even though the original program is disbanded, Europol and ESA continue to follow the project independently.

The Great Drought. In Spain, Andalusia becomes a desert. Corporate war in Spain incited by conflict over rights to water supplies; conflict stopped by EC-intervention.

2014: Vatican III: neo-Catholic Reformation. Celibacy is abolished and women finally get to be priests. In Poland, the Church of Poland is founded, splitting off from the Vatican. Various splinter-sects formed in response world-wide.

2015: Rise of the cyber-mercs as Lithuania hires cyber-soldiers to repel invasions by Latvian nations.

The EEC abolishes all military cyberware for use by private persons. All existing cyberweaponry must be registered and, if a psychological evaluation is failed, is removed. This does not stop the European Military Forces from creating numerous cybersoldiers.

After ten years of mutual sabotage and deception, Japan is kicked out of the EEC.

2016: Third Corporate War is fought entirely in the Net. As a result, Europol 3rd Directorate finally gets the money needed for taking a more aggressive stance towards netcrime.

Berne Incident: 127 eco-protesters are killed by corporate security in the Basque tourist resort of Berneo.

2017: Germany signs deal with Hungary, allowing the German army to train its troops in Hungary in return for military assistance.

2018: Brushfire wars erupt in New Central Europe. ESA mission to Jupiter.

First laws that prohibit human cloning at the sentient level are passed in Europe.

With Albanian support, Greece finally manages to annex Macedonia. The Serbs react by occupying half of Albania. Turkey does not intervene.

2019: Orbital colony revolt at L-3. ESA begins construction of an orbital lift launcher on the Canary Islands.

2020: NOW.



choose the Prime Minister. Once the Prime Minister has been chosen the President rubber stamps the selection and sets him and his supporters up as the government. Oh yeah, the President, there's elections every five years for that position, quite a media circus.

Got it so far? Well you'd think that after all this trouble to elect the Delegates they'd go on to make all the decisions. No. Instead they argue things out between them, decide what they think is the best option, and ask us to vote on it. We then get all the fun and joy of a one day referendum. It wouldn't be too bad if it happened occasionally but it gets a bit much sometimes, just last week we had three referenda. Yeah, we get a lot of say in what gets done, but somehow government doesn't do all that much.

So how do we get to vote so often? The magic of technology steps in. Everybody has a data port at home, connected to the net. Most TVs have a data entry pad for home shopping, e-mail, etc. All you have to do to vote is slip your EC ID card into the slot on the pad, make your choice and hit the 'Select' key. Voila, you're done. It's just the same process when you are asked to take part in a ballot, or opinion poll.

Recently politics has got a whole lot more interesting. Parts of France such as Breton and Alsace-Lorraine are beginning to feel nationalistic urges. They don't speak the same French language as the rest of us and feel isolated, different. More and more they are beginning to vote against France's needs and desires. They are demanding independence from France and, who knows, may just get it. It's not like the rest of us care all that much. Yeah, it's getting interesting, it just might get violent, but then that's real French politics.

French History My Way

For a long time France happily joined in the European pastime of beating up on each other under the direction of the ruling monarchs. Then over two hundred years ago the French people held a bloody war of revolution against the aristocracy and changed all the rules. A few years later they happily let Napoleon become Emperor and put everything back the way it had been. All those people died just so they could exchange a king for an emperor.

Napoleon tried his best to take over Europe, but failed. He was stomped on by Europe's usual response to anyone trying to control them all, those that hadn't been taken yet ganged up on him. For the rest of the nineteenth century France alternated between being a republic and being an empire. During their last attempt at empire they declared war on Prussia and got seriously beaten up so they decided to go with the republic concept. By this time they were up to the Third Republic.

Then came the twentieth century and the two big wars. In both of them, France was partially occupied by the Germans

with much loss of national pride, but their side won both times which made them feel better. After the second war France was run by the Fourth Republic, but this fell apart under internal pressures and the embarrassing loss of two of her major colonies: Indochina (became Vietnam) and Algeria.

France sorted herself out for a while with the Fifth Republic which ran things until the Wasting Plague came along. During this time France once again became one of the top countries in Europe, leading the way in the rush to create the European Community. Also at this time France was flooded by immigrants, mainly from North Africa. Funnily enough a lot of these people came from Algeria, the country that had been in such a rush to get rid of them a short while previously. Population pressures and unemployment led to a lot of racial problems and even race riots in some cities.

The Wasting Plague hit France hard in 2000. Almost a million died. OK, so it united the people a bit, and gave them something to worry about that was a bit bigger than mere racial disagreements, but a lot of people suffered.

After the Wasting Plague came the Sixth Republic, an unholy alliance between the government, corporations, unions, universities, and even the military. It got the job done; got France on her feet again, but it had no style, no life. It couldn't last and it didn't. In 2010, the people of France had had enough and rioting once more broke out in the streets (rioting is a major, and popular, form of political expression in France).

In 2014, the Seventh Republic was born, the great technological morass we now use to avoid making political decisions. It does let us have a much larger say in European decisions than most other country's electorates; we can have ballots on what our Councillors should do every time an issue comes up. Who knows, maybe it'll last.

BACKGROUND & CULTURE

France is a country that has been wracked by change and revolution for the past few hundred years. There is no definite French culture as such, only a vibrant mix of cultures from past and present which makes it very difficult to define.

Here, the North-East European attention to detail meets the South European flair for style. The old Celtic race has blended with the Franks, the Vikings, and Arabs from North Africa. Over the years these bloodstocks have blended together in France so that it is impossible in many cases to tell which stock someone comes from.

For years, Paris was the art capital of the world and attracted painters, sculptors, architects, writers, and musicians from all over. During the twentieth century many artists were drawn to the artists quarter, fell in love with France and stayed, often moving to farms in the country. These artists then became the foci for sprawling artist communes that have influenced Europe's artistic community up till now.





To the French being French is more important than being European, though most also feel that they are good Europeans. The French have always found ways to bypass other countries' rulings and this includes EC rulings. Yeah, the French are one of the biggest supporters of the EC, but that doesn't mean they agree with everything decided by it. For years the French government supported French industry in defiance of Community rulings and insisted on only using French made equipment in their military. The French are very good at dragging their feet or just plain ignoring rulings they don't like. It's all part of being French, really.

In the past ten years things have started to change. The government is less likely to buck the Council. Yeah, the Interior Commission's been climbing all over them to toe the line, but they're not being French. They're beginning to sell out to Brussels and we don't like it. There's a change in the air and I for one am not happy, France is at risk of losing what makes it good. Maybe it's time for another revolution.

There is a massive difference between urban and rural areas. Urban areas are very urban: hi-tech, packed, and busy with modern buildings. Biz goes on twenty four hours a day and you don't always know what's going to happen next. Rural areas are very rural, quiet, and many buildings are eighteenth century or older in style (and possibly reality). Biz still goes

down, but it's done at a completely different pace than in the cities, usually it's conducted at a table outside the town cafe over a bottle or two of wine.

Ah, now we get on to the most important, the most crucial aspect of French culture—food and drink. Good food and wine is essential for happiness in France. A government that messes up the availability of either stands no chance of survival, there'll be riots in no time at all. No business meeting is complete without multiple courses of food and a couple of bottles of wine. Wine is a religion here. Yeah, some people prefer to drink beer or spirits, but wine is an essential of life. Children are brought up with wine. Holidays are held on important wine days in the wine producing regions.

Many people blame the French passion for life on wine. Me, I don't think they're related. The French just have this way. They don't hide their feelings behind a mask like the British or Japanese. They don't project false joviality like Americans. Instead they exaggerate their emotions, they make sure you can't mistake how they feel.

The French have to exaggerate everything. Sport must be exciting, preferably dangerous. Art must be new, sensational. Eating must be an event, not just nourishment.

It's all part of *joie de vivre*, enjoying life to the full and reveling in it. Life's an adventure and the French love adventures.





France, home to much of European culture. The first country to revolt against the royalty and aristocracy of old. The country that pushed the most for Europe to succumb to the new aristocracy. It's sad really.

Hashim

Toulouse runner

Dreampainting

Dreampainting, do you remember it? Everybody focusing on one thing that was important to them, setting their sights on it and doing everything in their power to make it happen. Everyone 'painted themselves a dream, from the streetgild

dreaming of getting a job and settling down in a nice flat to the student dreaming of making his way to the Council and making the world a better place for us all.

Then, it seemed, it faded out from general use. Mr. Jean Public just gradually stopped working for his dream, slipped back into that day to day state he'd been in before. Not just in France, but all over Europe. The only ones that hung in their with their dreams were the obsessives, those with determination to see their dream through to the end.

What happened? Did everyone stop dreaming? No, they just stopped 'painting their dreams.

For years the government was right out there at the forefront of the idea, pushing it like it was the answer to all France and Europe's problems. Then, gradually, the tone changed, starting back in '18. The government didn't come right out and say it was bad, they just stopped pushing it. But they did start showing the down side. Remember when old man Du Bois knocked himself off 'cause the girl of his dream had died? Remember the media and government outrage? Just the beginning of a trend, my friend.

You know why? No. Because they didn't want you to know.

I've got a feeling it's a conspiracy, orders from the top. The very top. The Council and the Secretariat must have seen what was happening, what was coming. People were no longer happy with the status quo, no longer willing to put up with mindless lifestyles. They wanted to live. They wanted change and they were willing to do anything to get it, or die trying. People who are willing to go all the way are dangerous to those in power, very dangerous. In effect our wonderful leaders realised they were happily creating fanatics willing to die in pursuit of change, fanatic revolutionaries. I bet they felt stupid.

They couldn't just up and say any of this, it would have caused the very revolution they wanted to avoid. So, instead, they got the propaganda experts from the Interior Commission in and changed tack, nice and slowly, so Jean Public and his friends wouldn't notice. And you know what? It worked. Well, almost. Most people no longer 'paint. Most people are happy to amble along meaninglessly from day to day. Most people just don't care.

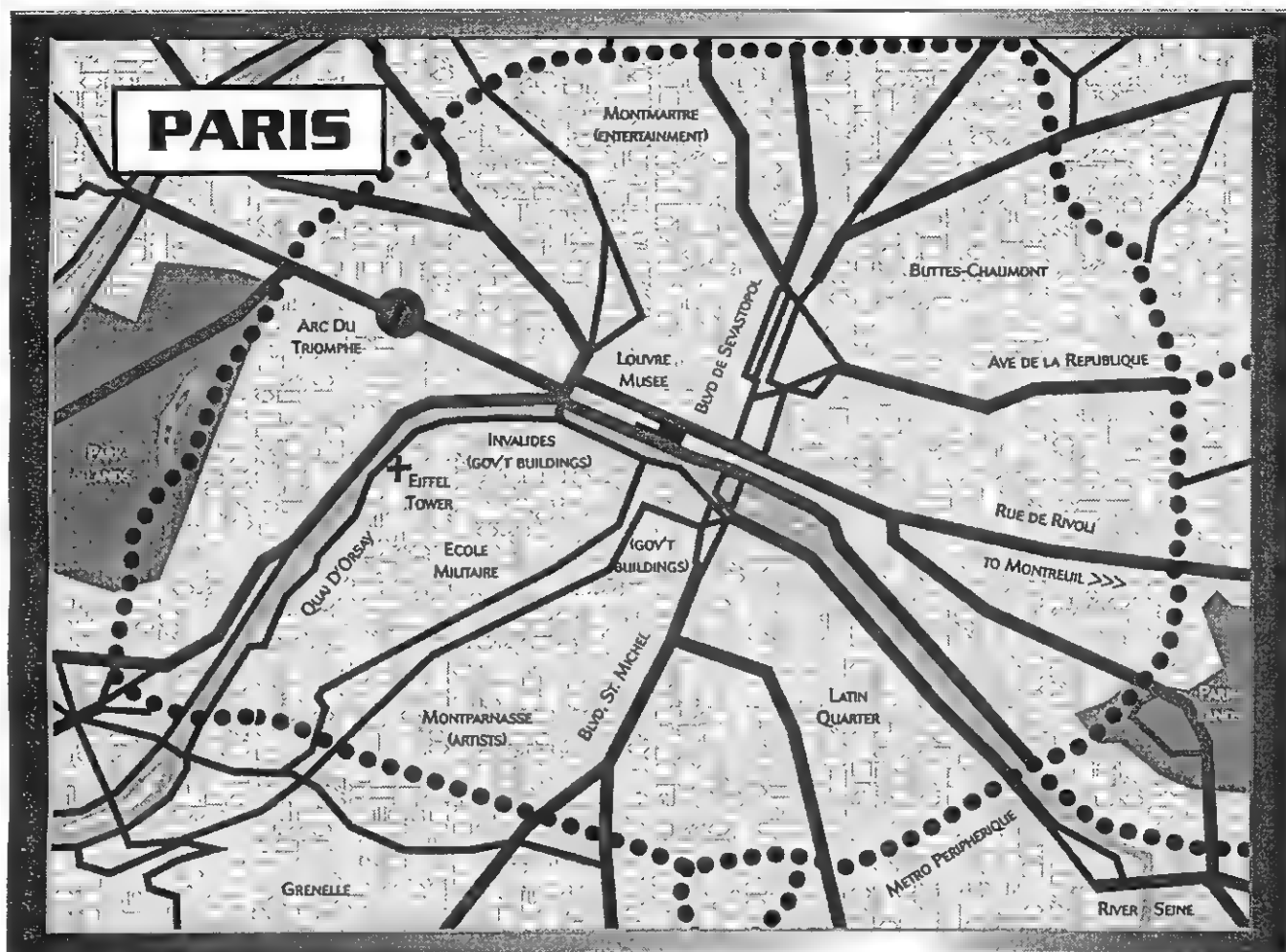
Most, but not all.

There are still 'painters out there. And in France we've got more than most. Remember: 'painting started here and it'll probably be here that it dies, if it ever does.

And that's my point. Are you going to let it die? Are you going to let those parasites in Brussels win? Or are you going to paint yourself a dream, a nice big dream, and then get people to help you paint, help you paint a nice new world?

It's your decision, but I know what I've decided, I know where I'm headed, and they'd better not try and stop me.





REGIONAL GUIDE

Paris

Ah, Paris. City of dreams, yet never sleeps. Gay Paris.

As London is Britain and Berlin is Germany, so Paris is France. In a way, Paris gives you a good idea what the whole of Europe is like.

Like London and Berlin, Paris is a wonderful, sprawling mixture of the old and the new. There are many grand old buildings (and even more not so grand) dating back centuries. These are mixed with more modern buildings in a casual, almost haphazard way. You can never tell what will be round the next corner. Will it be a row of eighteenth century appartements, a depressing modern housing block, or some weird twentieth century experiment? Does it matter? They're all part of the whole, and they all fit just where they are. Unfortunately the government's been on a renewal binge lately and many older blocks have been replaced by newer, 'better', more efficient blocks—such a pity.

Central Paris has a conglomeration of many types of buildings bunched together. Factories rub shoulders with

hotels and museums. The surrounding suburbs get more organised the further out you go.

Yeah, Paris has it's down side—the boring, grey-man town in Montreuil where the government village and the EC arcology are. The oppressive security and depressing people in the government quarter round the Central Ministries' towers. But they're not really Paris, they're cancers that have grown on Paris.

There's the slum areas on the fringes of the city centre, but they have a spark, a life of their own. So what if life is cheap and quick there, it has vigour. The people there aren't there because they like life there, they're there till they can get somewhere else and, believe me, they're trying. Just because they're the bottom of the heap right now doesn't mean they intend to stay and most are working on their way up and out every day. Some of them make it, unfortunately many don't.

Paris has many subcultures. They intermingle freely, and rarely get in each other's hair. The violence freaks spend most of their time being violent with each other. The gross-outs go and gross each other out. Generally everyone hangs out with their peers, and the mundanes of course.



There's the cryptos, gangs of kids that explore the old crypts and tunnels under the city, using the old Metro tunnels as freeways. Many feel that they only truly live when exploring a new tunnel not knowing where it will end and what they will find. These are good people to know, they can get you to anywhere in the old city, get you access to supposedly secure private datalines, and many other things I'm not telling about. A man's gotta keep some trade secrets you know.

How about the artistes? Groups of artists that compete with each other in public places such as parks. They put on shows, and display their work. Victory goes to the one that gets most public interest and sells the most work.

Then there's the usual street gangs with their turf wars and honour codes. Paris seems to have more than it's fair share of fashion gangs, gangs that compete on clothing style alone and will sometimes physically attack those who enter their turf who's sense of taste appals them.

Paris has a reputation for being *the* city for artists. The thing about a reputation like that is that it's self-fulfilling. The reputation attracts artists, the artists strengthen the reputation. Artists flock to the city in their thousands. Most visit for a short while, a year or two, but many stay.

Artists are experimenters, dreamers. They are constantly searching for something new, something that will catch the public's attention and hold it. Paris has many artists. Sometimes it seems every Parisian is an artist and Paris one big artistic experiment.

Paris is a great city for biz. Where else can you find buyers wanting state of the art hover tanks, just so they can paint them yellow and use them to deliver fresh, hot croissants and bread? Paris is alive my friends. It's a living, breathing city with a life unlike any other city in the world!

Marseilles

Marseilles couldn't be more different from Paris if it tried. This city belongs in Britain, not France.

Marseilles has the highest urban unemployment rate in France. It also has the greatest number of illegal immigrants in France. Hey, thirty percent of the population can barely understand French, never mind speak it. If you want to pay a visit, do yourself a favour and pop in an Arabic chip first.

Marseille has sprawling no-go zones, combat zones to the Americans, the area East from Le Rouet is nothing else. These are under martial law and are patrolled by the army. Usually there's at least one Foreign Legion regiment in residence at the army base at Mazargues. A nasty and dangerous side effect of the civil problems is that the sea walls are not getting the maintenance they need. Eastern Marseille is now regularly under a few centimetres of water, and it gets worse every year.

The port is one of the main bases of the Patrole Mediterranee, they've taken over the Vieux Port completely. These guys are not popular with the Arabic members of the Marseille population, many have lost family members to the patrole.

Marseille is the only city in France where it is acceptable, even expected, to carry firearms in public. EC citizens with a reasonably clear criminal records are issued weapons permits automatically on request for anything from knives to pistols and even shotguns. If your work entails going into, or through, dangerous areas you can even get permits for automatic weaponry.

This is not a town for the faint hearted. It's a killing ground where survival of the fittest has replaced civilisation.

BENELUX THE LOW COUNTRIES

POPULATION:26 MILLION
LITERACY RATE:96%
MILITARY:212,000
LANGUAGES:ENGLISH(OFFICIAL), DUTCH,
FLEMISH, FRENCH, GERMAN
ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN

—by Sirus deHaan, Euro contributor

Many travellers and Europeans refer to Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands as 'The Low Countries', treating them as one area when it comes to travel requirements and what to expect from the locals. Indeed the three countries share a common administration located in Amsterdam. Needless to say the locals don't take kindly to being lumped together with

those other people who are obviously not quite as good as those you would find in this particular country, thank you very much. This means that while these countries are in some ways similar it is wise to treat each country as separate and unique if you don't want to alienate the person you are talking to.

OVERVIEW

So, once in one of 'The Low Countries' what should you expect? Well, almost everybody speaks English in all three countries even if there are regional differences and the odd local word or two. The people are usually polite to foreigners, Germans excepted, and most will respond favourably to any attempt to speak their language, more often than not replying in English. As the EC uses the Eurodollar, currency is not a problem in any of these countries, but attempting to use foreign currency anywhere but Luxembourg can lead to police visit. This has repercussions for the innocent tourist so our advice is be sure of what you're trying to pay with.

Travelling from the north the terrain goes from flat and boring in The Netherlands, to totally-hilly Luxembourg with





Belgium having both plains and hills and even the occasional mountain. The rail and road links through all three countries is very good and well maintained even though European policy is to persuade people onto the public transport systems. The countryside you travel through is for the most part nondescript as all three countries are desperately short of living space in spite of the declining populations. This is due to the changes in physical size of The Netherlands and the amount of land in Belgium that is being used by the EC machine. Luxembourg has always been short of living space and with the success of its financial institutions it has attracted a lot corporate personnel to swell the population to record proportions.

The Netherlands has been forced to abandon some of it's land to the rising sea level and retreat behind higher and thicker sea walls to save the rest of it's vulnerable coastlines. In the Zeeland area this meant the sea walls moved inland and the outlying land was abandoned. As the sea reclaimed this land lots of small islands and sandbanks were created making that area dangerous to anything bigger than rowboats or hovercraft. Needless to say the smugglers like this area and many packages enter Europe over a seawall. As the Dutch lost land in one area they continued their reclamation of the north and now the entire area inland of the Afsluit Dyke is dry and almost totally built over. In fact, the whole western area of the country

is one big urban complex with a large industrial port at its southern end. Most of the Netherlands bulk trade and all of its fuel, enter through this port and accordingly, security is heavy. The rest of the country is taken up with producing food and flowers for the export market. As the flowers are luxury items the Dutch government puts a lot of resources into maintaining this highly profitable trade.

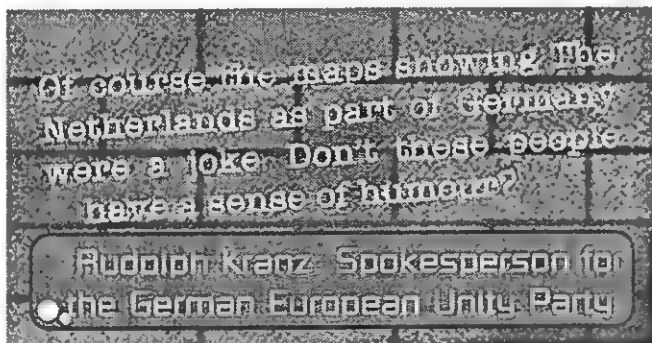
Belgium has lost a lot of it's land to both the EC and to the huge super-port complex that has built up around the original port of Oostende. This super-port is the main port for trade into and out of the EC and takes up all of Belgium's coastline and extends about 15km inland. The port has hundreds of berths for surface vessels and submarines and also has a huge airfield that is capable of taking the largest civilian cargo aircraft. Oostende is connected to the rest of the EC and beyond by numerous rail and road links that sprawl over Belgium like a giant web, cutting their way through the suburbs of almost every town and natural feature of the land.

Another large portion of Belgium is taken up by the sprawling EC metropolis of the Brussels/Antwerp/Ghent urban complex which is home to the European Council and all the accompanying offices and staff that go with it. All multi-national corporations maintain a large presence here and many countries maintain a consulate or embassy here. This means that the majority of the



population in the urban complex, still referred to as Brussels, are foreigners and as a result, although EC-controlled, security is also supplied by corporations who feel the need to use their own people to guarantee the safety of their staff. Needless to say this sometimes leads to friction between government and corporations but most people agree that Department D of the Interior Commission usually has the last word...or shot.

Luxembourg has managed to remain relatively unchanged for the last twenty years or so apart from the gradual urbanisation of most of the country. It's primary industry is banking and it is commonly referred to as the 'Switzerland of Europe' with it's no questions policy and it's uncooperative attitude towards official investigations and questions. In fact the main rule of banking in Luxembourg is as long as you stay clean in their country they don't care where your money came from or what you do with it. Needless to say many EC slush funds reside in Luxembourg as it's considered to be both more secure and cheaper than other well known financial safe-havens. The country itself is very clean and well cared for with seemingly no poverty or discontent visible to any visiting foreigners. The truth is that Luxembourg exports its unwanted to the other EC countries who take them in and house them in payment for financial services



GOVERNMENT

The low countries area is governed by the United Benelux Congress which is made up of representatives from all three countries. The number of congressmen for each country is in direct proportion to the size of their population. Each country holds its own elections where by the population choose its congressmen out of the candidates put forward by all the political parties.

The United Benelux Congress oversees the running of all three countries and the implementation of EC will. The benefits of a combined administration are less cost, better communications between the three countries and a united voice that is more easily heard in the corridors of the EC. The elections are held every three years in all countries but individual countries may hold elections to change their congressmen if they deem it necessary.

BACKGROUND AND CULTURE

All three countries were involved in the formation of the EC pretty much from the start and as a result their position in and on European unity has remained fairly constant. The Netherlands, especially, has taken a back seat in Europe for the last ten years as it applied all its efforts and a large amount of EC grants into holding back the rising seawaters and providing its population somewhere safe and dry to live. Now that its future is more secure many people expect the Netherlands to try to take a more active role in the way Europe is run and the way funds are allocated.

How effective the Dutch will be depends, to a large part, on whether it's relationship with Germany continues to deteriorate and how this will affect the internal politics of the EC. The hostility between Germany and the Netherlands has continued from the last century and centres mainly on Germany's desire for The Netherlands to ally itself to Germany with closer political and economics ties. Not surprisingly the Dutch are not keen on this idea and many an EC session degenerates into a shouting match between the two countries with many references to the 'Second War'. The other Lowland countries support The Netherlands for the simple reason that they enjoy 'baiting' Germany and perhaps because they fear they could be next in Germany's radical European harmonisation program.

Belgium is also a fairly quiet EC member, acting only to maintain its share of the EC budget and occasionally to aid a poorer country in its quest to become a more equal partner in the EC. Luxembourg speaks only rarely but is almost always listened to and its objections are seldom ignored. Many people seem surprised at the influence Luxembourg has but perhaps this, more than anything else, gives an idea of exactly how much money and, more importantly, information about the origins of that money is stored in the bank vaults of this small country.

As a country The Netherlands is well worth a visit because the Dutch have tried to keep at least some of their country attractive for tourists and during the spring, at least, the bulb fields draw thousands of visitors both from within the EC and also from further afield. Once there many visitors are pleasantly surprised by the amount of historic buildings and landmarks that are still standing and in good order. This coupled with the friendly and open way the Dutch treat most tourists, means that not only do most tourists enjoy themselves but many make return visits.

Many people visit The Netherlands for reasons other than tourism and occasionally this can cause conflict with other EC countries. The main other reason is drugs. Even before total European unity The Netherlands was well known as a place where it was easy to obtain soft drugs, they were still illegal but widely tolerated and if you were caught then you were only fined, no criminal record, no courts and no hassle. Needless to say that many people abuse the ease of access to soft drugs and buy large amounts to sell on in other EC countries. This causes prob-



lems with those other countries as they strive to control the growing demand for drugs in their native populations.

The Dutch authorities still vigorously fight the trade in hard drugs, some people say that the Dutch are among the most harsh in their operations against the hard drugs trade. Every year a number of foreigners are caught in The Netherlands trying to buy hard drugs for resale in other EC countries. In fact the Dutch authorities co-operate very closely with Interpol's sixth directorate and enforcement agencies in the other countries. This does not, however, seem to count with the anti-drug campaigners who still view The Netherlands as the source of much drug evil.

Belgium is split into three distinct areas: the port, the EC headquarters and the rest. Around the port of Oostende are several towns that house all those that work in the docks and many support industries. These towns tend to be dull and dirty and contain very little that will interest tourists, unlike in The Netherlands, neither the Belgians nor the EC made any effort to preserve the areas of historical importance as the port and surrounding towns grew to their present proportions.

Brussels is now huge, a sprawling mass of housing, corporate enclaves, embassies and all manner of shops and amenities that EC staff need to live their lives. Any corporation with European interests, and many that don't, have offices or some kind of representation in Brussels. This is 'the place' where everything in Europe is decided and where you need to be to have your voice heard and your opinion noted. Ordinary Belgians are vastly outnumbered by Eurocrats and foreigners and many feel discontented that they are limited to the role of servants while surrounded by the opulence that goes with EC headquarters. Needless to say the EC just points to the huge amount of money it brings to the Belgium economy and tells them to stop complaining.

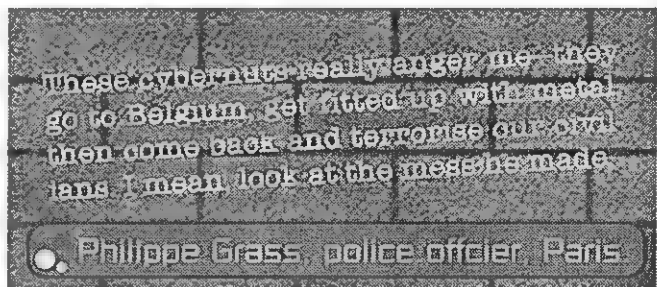
Luxembourg is a deeply forgettable country as far as tourism goes, while the countryside is picturesque and the towns are well maintained and laid out, the country is almost exclusively dedicated to the financial industry. This means that the business people like coming to Luxembourg but that it holds no appeal for anybody else. The people are friendly and the transport system very efficient, in fact many people compare Luxembourg to Switzerland but almost everybody says Luxembourg feels the friendliest of the two.

In fact the only blemish on Luxembourg's pristine image is the fact that it is acknowledged to launder even more money than Switzerland. Luxembourg is also known as the place EC officials hide their undeclared moneys as it is even more secure from official investigation than almost any other financial location. Couple this with the amount of money Luxembourg generates for the EC and it's easy to see why many people view Luxembourg as the quietest but most influential member of the EC.

Like Luxembourg, almost every other country in the EC has a secret economy that they all deny exists. For Belgium it's both unauthorised access into the EC and a healthy black market in

weapons. The running joke is that a Belgian weapons destination certificate is like a flag of convenience for a ship; it's all legal, but nobody lays much store in them. Also, if you buy your illegal weapons in Belgium, your suppliers can usually arrange a guaranteed if very expensive, route out of the EC if you need it. The other type of dealing you can do in Belgium is with the EC official of your choice. Brussels is the place to bribe, cajole, convince or even threaten EC opinion to your benefit. Needless to say there are millions of lobbyists working hard to make sure their corporation or country gets the largest slice of the cake.

The other thing Belgium is notorious for is the trading and supplying of illegal cyberware. Everybody knows that Belgium is the place to get that special cyberware fitted. Some of the ripper-docs have their own clinics and are tolerated providing they don't annoy the wrong people or have somebody important or, even worse, well connected die on their tables. The EC tries its hardest to close down ripper-docs with bad reputations as fast as they spring up but many people feel that the EC covertly approves the trade of illegal cyberware as it brings in money and new technology in an area that many countries feel should be banned.



The Netherlands is one of the best places to get illegal goods into the EC; use a small boat, sail up to a sea wall and throw your package over. Then your contact, if you were in the right place, picks it up and takes it to the end destination. You still have to avoid Dutch customs, Interpol and irate locals but this method is generally acknowledged to be the easiest. The south of The Netherlands is where most smuggling goes on; the hundreds of shifting islands created when the land was abandoned make policing very difficult and provide numerous escape routes for a fleeing smuggler.

REGIONAL GUIDE

Amsterdam

Even if you are not interested in smuggling The Netherlands is still a very nice place to spend a holiday. As well its bulb fields, The Netherlands has managed to retain its character while progressing into the twenty-first century. Located on the northern tip of the sprawling urbanised mass the Dutch call the 'Randstad' is Amsterdam, the second city of The Netherlands. As well its quaint and picturesque streets it also has many art galleries and museums, some housing world famous works of art.



The atmosphere is very appealing to tourists with relaxed local attitudes and most of the natives being friendly. Like most Dutch cities, the attractions of Amsterdam are well posted and easily accessible to everybody. The public transport system is superb with instructions available in most European languages and all the major attractions highlighted. Entry to most of the attractions is affordable and once inside you will find every attempt has been made to keep security as unobtrusive and low-key as possible. On your travels around Amsterdam there are many bars, cafes, restaurants and hotels to stop at and have a drink or some food. Amsterdam has cuisine from all over the world and it is a great place to try something exotic or unusual.

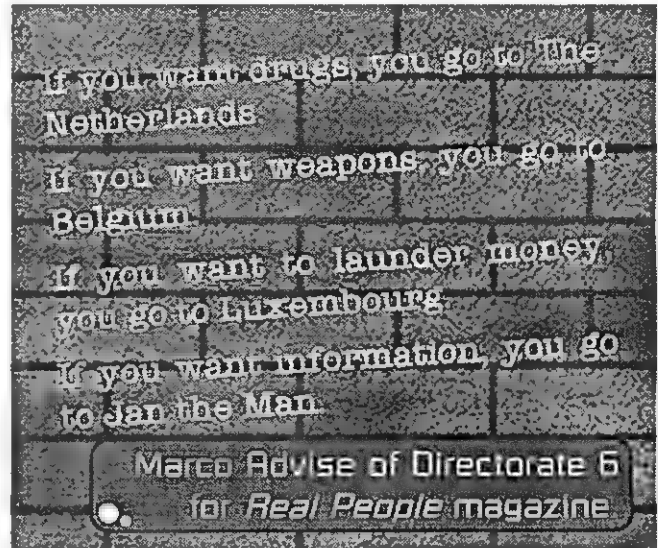
The Amsterdam 'red light' district still exists and many tourists come to The Netherlands just to visit this area. It is possible to find almost any sexual experience available for money even those that are frowned on or illegal. As ever there remain many pitfalls for the unwary. Many tourists want to try something different and these sometimes fall foul to the criminals that still thrive in the 'red light' area. The Dutch try hard to protect the tourist but inevitably many fall prey to muggers and thieves. The authorities advice is to keep to the busier main streets and ignore any offers of something special.

There are also 'hash' bars where, as well as the normal drink and drugs, you can get other less legal drugs providing they still fall into the soft drug category. It is also possible to buy harder drugs but attempting to do so in a 'hash' bar will get you either beaten up or, as is more likely, arrested. If you are simply a tourist looking for something more then the chances are that you will spend the night in the holdings cells and, following a fine and a lecture, will be deported the next day. Serious drug users will be given the option of entering a government run drug rehabilitation centre or a fine. People who are looking for a supply of hard drugs and get caught will be processed as fast as possible and then usually executed as soon as possible. While they will check Interpol's most wanted list the Dutch authorities are reluctant to hand over anyone facing serious drugs charges.

Brussels

Brussels is first and foremost the centre of the EC. It houses hundreds of thousands of EC employees and all the accoutrements they need. Many corporations have offices here and the largest have tens of thousands of employees stationed there to influence the decisions of the EC. This means Brussels is literally split into corporate and diplomatic areas spread amongst the native population. With all these important people living in Brussels security is tight, with both the EC and corporations seeking to maintain law and order. This means the average Belgian is often trampled underfoot by the political manoeuvrings that happen in and around the corridors of the EC. So, as a holiday destination, Brussels lacks any outstanding appeal and is not often visited by tourists except those passing through on the way to other more

attractive destinations. For those that do stop over they find good hotels, good restaurants and plenty of diversions to keep them occupied while they rest. For the more adventurous, it is still possible to find the real Brussels but these areas are less heavily policed and some tourists learn the hard way that even the heart of the EC is not as safe as the brochures would have you believe.



NPC DOSSIER

HANDLE: JAN THE MAN

ROLE: FIXER (INFO BRO)

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| INT: 8 | REF: 7 | TECH: 6 |
| COOL: 7 | ATTR: 6 | LUCK: 9 |
| MA: 5 | BODY: 6 | EMP: 7 |
| AGE: 33 | BTM: 0 | |

SKILLS: *Streetdeal* +6, *Wardrobe & Style* +3, *Human Perception* +5, *Interview* +5, *Social* +3, *Library - Search* +4, *Awareness* +3, *General Knowledge* +7, *Education* +4, *Brawling* +3, *Dance* +2, *Basic Tech* +3, *Shadow/Ditch* +5

CYBERWARE: Neural Processor (DataTerm Link), 1x set I-Face plugs, Techhair

Jan can find you any information you want. His rates tend to be very high, though. He never asks for cash, instead he requires favours. These will either be in advance or stored for later use, the difficulty depending on the difficulty of acquiring the information requested. Refusal to pay a debt to Jan once it is owed tends to be fatal, there are always people willing to kill you as their favour to him.



GERMANY

POPULATION:65.5 MILLION
LITERACY RATE:99%
MILITARY:221,000
LANGUAGES: ...GERMAN (OFFICIAL), ENGLISH,
RUSSIAN, TURKISH, POLISH,
FRENCH, ITALIAN
ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN,
SLAV, TURKOMAN

—by Karim Gibrahil, Euro contributor

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the big league. Germany is one of today's economic superpowers, and they are very proud of that. Mind you, this really comes as no surprise. Dragged down by the limping GDR economy, hard-hit by the Plague and hampered by short-sighted policies pre-millennium, it's a wonder they are still with EC at all.

The buy-up of the GDR proved to be more than the country could swallow. At the same time, world-wide recession threatened to draw foreign capital out of Germany. This drift was augmented by political decisions that destroyed the cost-effectiveness of German business.

Fortunately, there was the Great Plague. Call me psycho, but if it weren't for the Plague Germany would now be third rate. The great Catalyst, as I like to call it, eliminated the age/health care problem and reduced the unemployment. But the biggest effect it had was to kick off a series of reforms. As a result, cost-effectiveness rose and the country had a economic comeback.

But it came with a price. Germany developed a kind of complacent arrogance. Now that they own half the East Bloc and dominate the EC they can be as complacent as they want. Until the next crisis. Which is coming up fast. The French want an ever-increasing piece of the pie. The infighting within the EC bureaucracy has been tough these last years, but now that the French are on par with the Germans, it's quite literally a battleground.

A Little Trip Through Germany

Traveller, if you come to Germany, you first have to pass rigorous checks at the airport. I came on a friend's invitation to Darmstadt, a medium-sized city south of Frankfurt. Back in the states, I saw three stiff's on my way to the airport. The air was



thick, and acid rain discolored my favorite shirt. I was pretty happy to leave for a couple of weeks.

I was quite unprepared for the Old World. Escaping from the everlasting smog and grime, it was like I had gone wonderland. Home was dirt, crime and a darwinistic techno-hype—here was undercover plotting like chess games, living trees and children actually *playing* in the street. I spent my first hours in a wide-eyed search for Humpty Dumpty.

Frankfurt's airport is big as European airports go, but nonetheless, it was quite clean. There were corps flying in with me who weren't afraid to stain their Armani suits on the waiting benches. They were also the first to get through customs. I wouldn't say those German customs officers have preconceptions, but this guy took one good look at me and asked (asked!) me to come with him for an "advanced" search.

I tell you, never ever pack a weapon unless you have real good paperwork. Otherwise, you end up getting searched inward and outward. And I only had a little "letter opener." It's not that they'd bully you like their US counterparts, they simply ask you to comply, firmly, without any fuss. That's what frightened me most.

Well, after I finally got through customs, I took the maglev to Darmstadt from the station at Frankfurt Flughafen. Again, there was a mix of execs and German tourists. The maglevs crisscrossing Germany are clean and well-maintained, with little tv-sets displaying infotainment. Since they were in German, I didn't understand much, but as far as I can see, they're as bad as ours at home. If you wonder why I'm not chipped, customs took half of my chipware for an in-depth check by their netrunners.

For additional protection, each car has "panic-buttons." As far as I understood it, once you push that button, a fully-equipped police squad will get into your car at the next stop. The description also said that pushing the button without need infers a stiff fine and a records check.

Darmstadt's train station is quite small. When I got there, they were renovating it; Germans are obsessed with old things. They don't simply tear down derelicts and replace them with something newer and cooler. Instead, they renovate every fifty years. The inner city looked like it probably had been this way for the last 60 years. Of course, not all of these cities have remained unscathed since medieval times—many were destroyed in the bombing raids of WWII. Darmstadt is no exception.

People here tend to live a lot denser than in the states. There are no wide open streets and there are no little malls dotting the city. The cities have definite center with shops and admin buildings. Circling them are quarters of concentrated residentials. Darmstadt's center is built around a palace of some local noble; you see history everywhere. I walked to my friend's house on the other side of the city. A quick look at one of the maps standing around (at every major junction) told me that it would be only six clicks to my target. Just imagine, you can walk through a city of 170,000 in 45 minutes. That's what I call high density.

There is a definite cop presence; they wear green outfits and ride bikes. Not the motor kind, the ones you move yourself; that's for ecological reasons. And why not? They can always call for backup. Backup means an AV/APC with riot troopers inside. Germans get nervous when it comes to terrorism. That's why they've upped security in the major cities. Not that armored cars dominate the streets and black-clad troopers search houses at a moment's notice. German cops try to make their customers feel safe, not threatened. After all, a city under siege doesn't confer a good business atmosphere. I was especially fascinated by the way they treated the few punks hanging out at the marketplace. One of them rode over on his bike and told them to put their beer away—and waited until they had done so. Not even a knife was drawn. How boring!

When I reached my destination, the first thing I did was ask my friend for a walk in the woods. I hadn't seen more than ten trees in one spot since I was a kid. Only twenty minutes from his house there was a real forest! Under its green leaves I began coughing like a madman; the fresh air was simply too much. We saw a couple of foresters spraying the trees with some protective liquid. This made me feel like home again. I took a little malicious pleasure in the fact that the Germans weren't entirely untouched by worldly troubles.

SPARE TIME

What do Germans do in their spare time?

Germany still has one of the best road-systems in the world. The German *Autobahns* are legendary for being well-maintained, safe, and with no speed-limits. That's right, here's the place you can test your new Porsche 990 without harassment by cops or bandits.

That is, if you can afford it. The price of Choo has always been a lot higher here, due to the fact the the state wants its citizens to move around in nice, clean maglevs. Thus, they raised gas taxes year after year, until only the most wealthy could afford to drive their own private vehicle on a daily basis. Still, when does a price tag stop us from doing dumb things?

The Germans still love their cars—a lot. Every Saturday you can see hundreds of beavers in their cozy little suburbs cleaning their status symbols down to the last speck of dust. This is even truer for the youth. Without much to do other than listen to Corp muzak, watch EC-friendly tv and do schoolwork, they turn to more dangerous hobbies.

Any friday night local youth gather at some pre-arranged area, looking for contestants and booze. After a few hours, they climb into their cars and test the theoretical limits of combustion engines. The speed-limiting devices and safety options of most modern cars should make fatalities uncommon, but they're regularly bypassed and at 350 km/h, even the most reliable safety device can't do a lot for the driver... The Police try to stop Autobahn-Races—after all, cleaning up after someone's misjudgement really sucks.



In the cities you see a totally different picture. Aside from the VRcades and other reliefs from prosperity-induced boredom, the big cities are home to various events.

First, is of course, soccer. Germans love soccer, being in no way less fanatical about it than Brits. Every Saturday, thousands stream into the stadiums; normally-tame Germans get so hyped, it's astounding. This leads to mass brawls that occasionally end in fatalities—that's why soccer stadiums have the same security as any airport. Fans are welcomed at the train station by police and searched thoroughly. If they find any weapons, you get arrested for 24hrs.—with no refund on tickets.

Second are the Raves. Originally pure techno-dance parties, they are now *the way* to meet people in the underground scene. Their legal precursors in the mid-90's had attendance numbers of 30,000 and more. The first illegal Acid House Raves of 1988 are spoken of with the admiration of the "good old times." Back then, someone drove a truck loaded with PA-equipment into a deserted building and called some friends. Maybe some irate neighbor called the cops, maybe not.

Today the game has become a little faster. As a rule, orbiting choppers spot a large heat source—like 300 dancing people—within 40 minutes. Thus, illegal raves need to be constantly on the move, journeying from abandoned building site to empty warehouse in half-hour shifts. You get to know lots of good hide-outs this way.

So, how do you know where and when the next rave is scheduled? The best answer is contacts. Word of an impending rave spreads via hearsay channels, with the bigger ones being posted as encrypted messages on BBSs. It's not easy to find a rave and the participants like the exclusivity. But the rewards can be equally big. Raves are the meeting point for most Rockerboys in the surrounding area, as well as talent-scouts and other in-people. They are also great parties with people of all nations coming together in order to dance. Just prepare to clear out quickly in case the police move in. They search *thoroughly* for drugs.

Ok, so we know what youngsters do in the 21st century. But how do Germany's numerous ritzy execs spend their time off?

THE HANSE-CLUB

This club is in all the old cities belonging to the Hanse. Those which remain above water, that is. For those not in the know, the Hanse was a trading association in medieval times. Rostock, Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg were some of the cities involved. Now, the Hanse-Club has dedicated itself to reenacting this time. The members take the roles of traders and dress accordingly—these people take their hobby seriously. Mind you,

Clubs

One should definately mention clubs. Germans love clubs. From rabbit breeders to role-playing enthusiasts, all converge in a club. From a financial point of view this is doubly interesting, since clubs are tax-exempt as long as they are "beneficial to the community."

There are thousands of clubs out there; the most common being sports clubs. They center around anything from soccer to chess. Then there are the clubs covering everything else. The Society of Net Users spring to mind, with their contest each year for the best VR done by members. Several major contracts from firms wanting to spiff-up their data forts have gone to the winners. But this is just one of the many reasons to participate in a club. Another good reason is that you meet lots of people with the same interests; they can give you good advice.

The best reason for the stuffy German is the "Vereinsmeierei." This word refers to a host of things people do in clubs. There is a class of Germans who delight in the little political quarrels so common to clubs. They haggle over the simplest things with a verve you might not see otherwise, and they also love to scheme. People get ousted by political backstabbing, or protégés advance while their betters are lost. You see, idealism is about as important in clubs as in the government. In a way, clubs mirror the government—fools zealously striving for power for no other reason than power itself. If you don't like those running the party, you simply found one yourself, it's as easy as that. But the lure of power is nonetheless strong for the little man on the street.

And then there are the old *Burschenschaften*. They have their origin in the "revolution" of 1848, when students and educated people formed associations with strong traditional values, like patriotism and a belief in hierarchies. Needless to say, I think they suck. Some of these societies have revived the old dueling tests, and all feature massive drinking and other styleless stupidity.

There are lots of different students' societies in Germany. Some operate country-wide at all major universities, while others are single-location. Some invite only students with a certain political outlook, some are more open. Speaking of political outlook, their views might have been revolutionary in the nineteenth century; today they're merely reactionary and nationalistic.

Most societies own houses near campus where members can live. These houses are also meeting points for those who are

the real goal is to gather high-level business people to have fun and talk biz. To this end, they have a strict membership policy. But an invitation into the club is well worth the boot-licking and little "presents" given. Once in, you're suddenly close friends to a host of rich and influential Corps. They swap business news of the more secretive kind, make special deals and generally support each other with contracts and contacts. It's great. Oh, by the way, only Germans need apply.





long finished with schooling. The so-called "Alte Herren" support the societies by sponsoring individual students or donating upkeep money. Students who sign on with such a society have certain advantages, such as an older member who organizes a profitable job for you, or helps you in other ways. This solidarity bit is the nice thing about these societies. The price is giving up your cryochilled outfit and jacking into the ultra-mainstream, punk...

Music

Ok, so Germany might be synonymous for Europap, that lowest denominator type of sound, strictly music for the masses. You hear it in lifts, in the radio or in infotainment shows. This trash is everywhere, and very popular, so my best advice is to get a Wearman™ as soon as possible.

But Europap isn't the whole picture. German trends have again drifted towards synthetics at their best. Technoise and its various derivations dominate much of the German scene. If you're hip, you already know about Technoise. If not, listen up.

Technoise is quite popular with the discerning young punk; it was popularized by Germany's own *NetWerk*, actually. You've got your Overlay style from London, Jazznetic from Rotterdam and Echo from Frankfurt. In addition, there are people producing Frock (Fractal Rock) all over the place. The good thing is, Technoise is quite easy to produce. You only need a small com-

puter, some software and you're ready to buzz. Those of you with a message might miss the political attitude, but you're missing the point. Technoise is strictly for partying, tripping and dancing. People meet and dance up to the runner's point. Maybe that's a political statement in itself, *oder?*

If you want to get into political sounds, go to Chemnitz. Aside from PostStyle, you'll get to hear political poetry and see virtual demonstrations. German youths congregate yearly for the big virtual-fests of Bogatynia, a town security on the border between Germany and the Czech Republic. It is the mecca for free-minded idiots and reality junkies from all over Eastern Europe.

POLITICS

Political life in Germany is the same as in any other democracy. Ok, so people don't tend to vanish after voicing their opinions, but they still might face a court suit. The voting process could not be called progressive, but traditional is more like it—they still use paper!

There are several major parties in Germany. Of them, two really run the show, but depend on the others for majorities. This way it's somewhat more democratic than dual party systems, but only marginally so. Political parties tend to converge on the major drifts within the majority. Actually, they converge on those drifts hyped by the media, but that's another story. There is no moral minority or powerful christian group imposing their opin-



ions on others. Instead, people here are simply a bit more conservative, but less extreme, than in the States. Real novelties seldom come from Germany.

Germany is now an international giant. For the last hundred years (and more), German politics have always had the aim of ensuring its hegemony in Europe. Today, Germany is the dominant power in Europe. Its politics are meant to ensure this for a long time.

After the break-up of the old Soviet hegemony, Germany was quick to replace it in the resulting economic vacuum. Most of the Eastern European economies depended on trade with their big brother to the east. When it became apparent that the Sov-state was in danger of going bankrupt, people turned west. Germany welcomed them all with open arms. Trade was made easier and joint-ventures sprung up everywhere. At first, this seemed like a good way to stabilize the faltering economies behind the broken Iron Curtain.

This changed when Volker Mohr came to power. He reintroduced patriotism into German culture (thanks to the Nazis, patriotism or nationalism had quite a bad odor). The fears of a renewed German nationalism made foreign politicians tread carefully. It was never a specific goal of Germany to dominate economically; it simply happened. Ok, so the Germans were quite proud of their success, but open propagation of patriotism was still a taboo.

Volker Mohr didn't care too much about taboo—or neighboring countries for that matter. He came to power in a time of crisis, with a political program of easy solutions for difficult problems. His origins were in the "Neue Rechte", a loose group with strong opinions on regaining the German birthright. Mohr's party took pains to seem acceptable, but once in power, shed the mask quickly. Even though their easy solutions were impractical, they paved the way for radical reforms. Particularly in terms of police power and business incentives. Like his colleagues in France, he called on the populace's fear of foreigners, and knew how to use it.

Luckily, his escapades made him serious enemies. His backers deserted him, as Mohr became too hot to handle and his ideas too radical, even for the like-minded. In the end, the various groups united under his name rebelled. Nonetheless, he had made his mark on German politics. The Fortress Europe

concept and the cozy relationship between government and corporations are his legacy.

BUSINESS

German economics work on two levels. First are the megacorps, just like anywhere else. Second, are the thousands of small corporations that provide services and implement technological novelties.

There are several large megacorps with their headquarters in Germany. Names like EBM, IEC and Daimler-Benz ring in the ears of every Corp in the world. Nearly any civilized capital sports one of their sky-scraping centers of corporate culture. It is these giants of architecture that truly mark a megacorporation—outside of Germany, that is.

Megacorporations tend to scale down their regional headquarters within the borders of Germany for a simple reason. Germany has one of the best telecommunication networks in the world. And, thanks to NetWatch, net-space in Europa is virtually crime-free. This resulted in the wide implementation of telecommuting; the act of linking your home computer (via Net) to your office mainframe, enabling you to work at home.

But Germany's economy could not rely solely on megacorporations to be as powerful as it is. There are thousands of middle-class operations that provide services, and fill development niches, not covered by the megacorporations. They specialize in producing solutions for your individual problems. Rather than eliminating your competitors, they give you the technological edge needed to survive. All in all, Germany still has a viable middle class.

Many mayors of German villages have invited high-tech industries with incentives like tax reductions, low land prices, etc. The idea is that individual businesses can profit from cooperation. Combining their specialized technological solutions into new unorthodox products, they create an environment that is extremely fertile for rapid development. The jointly-designed products are then produced under a brand name owned by all participants.

This is not the only advantage of "village" industries. In modern times, it has become necessary to cooperate in security matters, as well. Unifying their assets, the companies can field as much security as their big brothers. Another advantage comes from sharing resources. They might rent programming time on a

THE SAFETY OF TELECOMMUTING

Telecommuting also opens up a new world of crime. On a percentage basis, Germany has more users than the U.S., and the Net gives charlatans a wonderful venue. For example, Net-based gigolos are real popular.

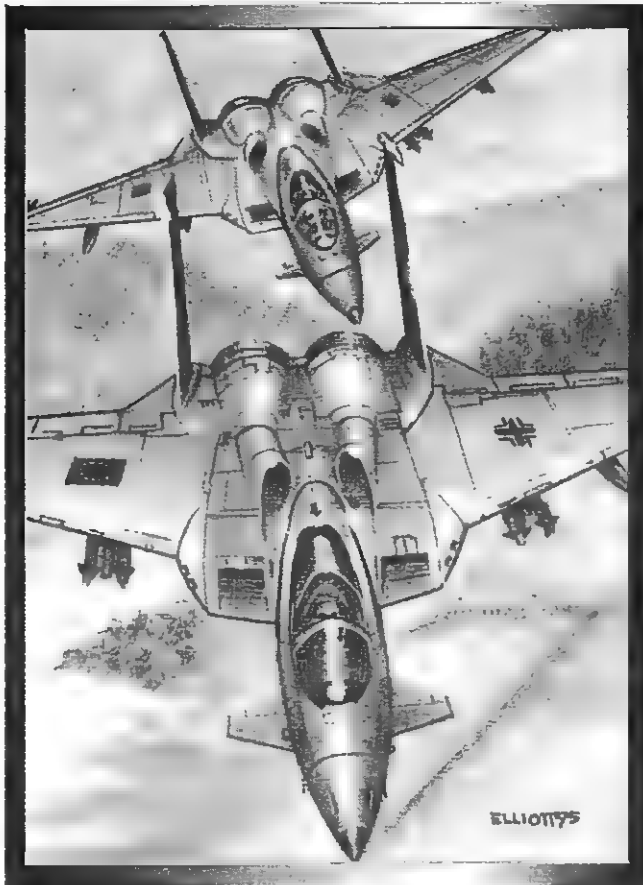
Then there are hardcore criminals. They extort money by posting death threats on victims' message mail. If they pay up, all is well. If they go to NetWatch, the extortionists waste no time or money—but the victim lives in fear. Someday, someone will wait for them armed with *Firestarter*, or something even

more deadly. You never know, because there's always vulnerability as long as you work jacked-in.

Another MO is to invade some office worker's home computer. People still make the mistake of storing passwords in accessible places, like their hard disc. You can sift the stored information for code words. As soon as you have a probable list, you have a decent chance of penetrating the company's mainframe.

Of course, there are countermeasures. Modern AIs irregularly ask their users a question about their personal lives. This way, people without the proper background can easily be filtered out.





central mainframe, or share a vehicle pool, thus reducing operating costs.

Of course, there is paranoia that one of the business partners might be subverted by the megacorps. To defend against this, village industries sometimes exchange shares. In the end, this creates a medium-sized corp with several full-fledged profit centers.

Recruitment from Day One

Easies and Corps have one urgent problem in Germany: employees. As a direct result of the Plague and the overall decrease of births in Germany, there are too few children to go around. At the same time, the demand for employees is rising.

The corporations import their future employees from other countries. They actively encourage current employees to send their children to specially chosen schools, and if they've proven themselves, help them join the company. By this method, a steady flow of employees is ensured, and a long-lasting emotional link between company and employee is established.

The Easies have certain needs concerning specific nationalities. Therefore, they have to monitor schools in various nations for promising candidates. These people are contacted and invited to an introductory test. Lucky winners are transferred to EC-

DAIMLER BENZ

HEADQUARTERS: Stuttgart, Germany

REGIONAL OFFICES: Berlin, Hamburg, Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Bucharest, Night City, Nairobi, French Guyana, Tokyo, Baikonur

EMPLOYEES:

| Worldwide | Covert | Guards |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| 500,000 | 7,000 | 10,000 |

Daimler Benz has its roots in the first inventors of automobiles. Thus for long years, car manufacturing remained its sole business. After a while, though, they spread out into other branches of transporting. Today they produce everything from cars to missile systems. The various firms making up this megacorporation are all giants in their fields. Mercedes Benz still builds luxury cars, while MBB, Messerschmidt Bölkow Blohm, produces parts of weapons systems like rocket boosters or guidance systems. In addition DB also has its fingers in Airbus Industries, Fokker Airplanes and the production of Maglevs through AEG. This corp is moving.

To maximize efficiency, DB started a cooperation agreement with Mitsubishi in the early nineties. Though it took quite some time to bear fruit, DB and Mitsubishi have worked together successfully in the past on several tank designs and space equipment.

You can't travel from your home into space without touching something that hasn't been constructed with parts made by Daimler-Benz.

owned private schools for further studies. There they learn additional languages, administration techniques and special courses that prepare them for commission jobs.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy has a long and wonderful tradition in Germany. Let me give you an example:

There was a middle-class pigeon breeder, Michael T., who wanted to build a birdhouse. He lived in the small village of Geinsheim, and was a good neighbor and husband. He knew he had to get to get a permit for the pigeon-house, so he went to the Board of Works. The Board of Works demanded a certificate of good conduct and the plans of his house as well as the pigeon-coop. So he took a day off and went to the police. After a lengthy background check, they gave him two stamped and signed copies of the certificate. After returning to the Board of Works, they told him he had to check with the local Bureau of Animal Care. They had the Bureau alerted because they wanted to make sure the pigeons were in good hands. So Michael ventured forth in the belief that this would be the last stage before he could begin work.

The Bureau of Animal Care demanded another copy of his certificate of good conduct to see if he was a known animal-abuser. The Bureau also made a background check and found



out that Michael had been a member of the local pigeon-breeders club since he was twelve. After processing the data, they sent him a go-ahead and a note telling him he also needed a permit from the Board of Health. That was four weeks after he first contacted the Board of Works.

The Board of Health informed him they needed the pigeon-house plans as well as certificates of health from his family. Pigeons are transmitters of diseases, so the Board check to see that the pigeon-house had sufficient facilities. They also wanted to insure that the birds wouldn't be infected by Michael's family. Michael called his doctor and got the documents passed to the Board of Health. After another three weeks, the Board sent an affirmative.

Overjoyed, Michael returned to the Board of Works. The Board accepted the documents and told him sorrowfully that they had found out Michael would have to declare his pigeon-house to the Air Ministry. They feared the ministry would complain, for it is forbidden to breed pigeons within a certain distance of airports. Two months had passed and Michael's pigeons still had no home. This was getting on his nerves, and gradually he began to drink excessively.

Nonetheless, Michael went to the Air Ministry to find that there was no airport near his village. He brought those new signed and stamped documents to the Board of Works thinking this would be the end of his quest. How naive he proved to be...

The Board of Works had not spent their time idly. No sir, they had checked the plans of his house—and saw that his father had built a veranda without a permit. Within a few days, they filed a report ordering Michael to demolish the veranda. And it was such a nice veranda; Michael's father used to sit there and watch birds with his son...

Michael couldn't allow some dumb bureaucrats to tear down the veranda connected with such fond memories. So, he went to court. By now, he had forfeited his vacation time visiting various boards and bureaus. His wife threatened divorce since he spent no time with her. By the time he got a temporary decree to keep the veranda, he was recovering from a nervous breakdown. The neighbors started to talk. Michael drowned his frustrations with more alcohol. When he came to work drunk one morning, he was fired.

Nonetheless, Michael persevered in his single-minded quest for his pigeon-house. He lost the second court ruling, and one fine morning, a bulldozer and two workers appeared at his house intent on pulling the veranda down. After a brief dispute, Michael cracked a worker's skull with a shovel. The day after he was sent to prison, the permit to build a pigeon-house arrived.

So you see, this is how *not* to do it. Now lets look at Daniel Reimann and how he did it:

Daniel was somewhat wealthy; had a wife and two kids. He planned to build a villa on the cheap ground near a nature reserve. He never even set foot in an office. Nonetheless, he was already living in his villa for a year when Michael was sen-

tenced to 25 years. The trick is, Daniel commissioned a special consulting firm to do the running.

The Consulting Firms

Administration consulting is new to Germany. Even though getting things done wasn't easy before 2000, the last twenty years saw the rise of a horde of new permits and certificates. On the surface, this trend has been justified by the rise of crime and population density, the real reason may only be guessed at.

As you've seen in the example above, there is need for someone familiar with administration techniques. These someones formed small companies, usually with a city-wide reach. For example, getting Daniel's permit would cost about 23,500eb. Luckily, this is Germany, and there are enough people who will meet the price.

If you look behind the scenes, there are justifications for the pricing. Administration counseling isn't all running around, moving papers between ministries. In reality, it has more to do with social skills. Administration counselors make a job out of establishing the necessary connections.

For example, isn't it funny all the department chiefs of the Board of Works in Düsseldorf play golf in the most expensive clubs of the region? Sperlich & Sührer, GmbH presents these memberships as a little christmas present every year. By the way, one of these memberships costs 50k eb. And believe me, the Board of Works isn't the only administration receiving perks from S & S. But Sperlich & Sührer is an exception in the business. They operate regionally throughout the KDC, while most consultants are city-wide only. Everywhere you look, connections is the easy way to get things done, but this wheels and deals biz is a lot less obvious than in Italia or the Ukraine. In Germany, these deals are always 'Eyes Only'.

REGIONAL GUIDE

Frankfurt

Frankfurt is Europe's number-two banking city after London. Here are the sky-scraping offices of WeltGeschäftsBank, Merrill, Asukaga & Finch, and Sumitomo, as well as a dozen other national and international consortiums, cast their shadows over one of Germany's ugliest cities.

Frankfurt includes the cities of Frankfurt, Offenbach and scores of towns in the immediate area, with the International Airport effectively a city of its own. The Frankfurt Airport (among the top 3 of Europe) was hampered by an essential problem: space. With the Rhein-Main Area being one of the densest inhabited areas in Germany, there simply wasn't room for expansion. That was, until 2011. In that year, the *Flughafen AG*, which manages everything in and around the airport, bought up surrounding land.

Of course, this expansion didn't go without massive criticism by eco- and civic-rights groups. The riots dwarfed the



demonstrations of 30 years before, when Airstrip West was built. This situation didn't pass without fatalities and left a lot of bad feeling in the area. The rumors about the FAG buying an anti-missile system are true...

Today, Frankfurt Airport is the principal gateway into Germany. With a passenger volume of 55 million+ and plenty of cargo traffic, it is a center of world-wide commerce. More than 100,000 people work in and around the airport. All of these people are controlled either directly or indirectly by Flughafen AG. The FAG is one of the few corps no other German corp wants to be the enemy of. Since it controls Germany's largest airport, it also has the power to delay or stop any shipment that passes through. This can be very costly.

With such a big airport smuggling is usually a big issue. In Frankfurt this is a little different. The Bundesgrenzschutz (Border Police) takes care of most major smuggling operations. The best, and some say only, way to smuggle bad habits through their controls is in a diplomat's suitcase. So, how do the habitually-challenged get their supplies? That is actually quite easy. The BGS seldom checks the mechanical spaces of the planes themselves. With shady techs working both ends, it sounds like easy money. Or so you might think. As with all things German, this unofficial commerce is tightly controlled.

Believe it or not, the FAG is the largest regional importer of contraband. They supply all the local syndicates as well as the national police agencies. Due to the state customers, FAG doesn't worry too much about the law, though it does declare most illegal items to them.

Upon arrival, the contraband is distributed to various areas in nearby Offenbach, home to the local syndicates. And again, syndicates here are not exactly what you are used to. The syndicates of Offenbach are more like distributors without advertisement; they work with the consent of the local authorities. This is possible due to a specialized deal: If the police let the syndicates sell high quality 'wares to relaxing businessmen, then the banks will continue to "donate" serious amounts of money to the city. For the police this works out fine: first, people don't use dirty drugs with unpredictable effects. Second, thanks to the status quo, the gangs behave themselves. And finally, the police get to use all that shiny new hardware.

München

Munich is the place the corp elite go shopping between trips to their holiday resorts in the Alps. Munich sports everything a relaxing person might want: shopping strips for the filthy rich, cleaner air than Chemnitz and you can even walk home drunk without getting mugged. Sure gives you the creeps, doesn't it?

To make sure the situation stays that way, the Bavarian government is willing to go to extremes. Security in the *Freistaat* borders on the psychotic. They even patrol the borders to the other German *Länder*, in case an illegal tries to invade from that direction.

But all is not well in the state of Bavaria. Last year's Schwabing Riots, incited by *Vulkan Underground's* fiery poetry, show that the repressive policies of the Bavarian government aren't entirely welcomed by the populace.

In a suburb of Munich, Siemens has built itself a little corporate city. Siemens manufactures everything from computers to reactors. They are also one of the biggest manufacturers of solar power arrays. It was they who invented the TRC chip, the first step towards cyber-technology. As always though, it was the Americans and Japanese who actually implemented the chip.

Köln-Dortmund Conurb

Home to Übermensch Cybernetics, Rheinmetall and Brandt-Neumann, the KDC is Germany's premier industrial zone. It includes the *Ruhrgebiet*, traditionally resting on a base of heavy industry and the *Rheinland*, with its chemical industry and the car factories near Cologne.

Traditional coal mines and steel-mills have vanished, replaced by modern factories that produce the high-tech hardware edgerunners can't miss. They are operated by Germans as well as third-generation Turkish workers, who make up a significant percentage of the local population.

This situation produces much of the unrest in the area. Even before the Mid-East Meltdown, Turkish settlers brought their conflicts with them. The PKK (a Kurdish terror organisation) started bombing Turkish shops in the 90's. These attacks accelerated, and in 2003, the BND attempted to put an end to it. The fight continues, but now with restraint.

There are essentially two things that make the KDC worthwhile for enterprising edgerunners. First of all, the amount of high-tech makes the KDC a prime target for industrial espionage and secondly, the continuing war between Turks and Kurds, which occasionally has a need for outside operators.

Nearby, the former government district of Bonn now houses the offices of Biotechnica and other megacorporations.

Berlin

Berlin is the capital of Germany. That alone should tell you something about security in the inner city. After the the government moved to Berlin in 2000, the city filled with politicians, lobbyists and administrators.

These pressure groups banished the left-wing scene from Kreuzberg, making the quarter another home for Yuppies. To be exact, they banished almost all people of lower pay grades from Berlin's center. The hordes of officials robbed the city of much of its charm and style. Aside from classical concerts, only the numerous cabarets could survive the dryness of Ministries and Boards. The radical-youth culture Berlin which had been so famous for either moved to the suburbs, or to cities like Chemnitz.

But there is another side to Berlin. Right after the Berlin Wall fell, all the big corporations made bids for the best parts



In this heated time, dispossessed officers of the KGB stumbled upon the Chemnitz powder-keg. Sensing a chance, they recruited followers for doing what they did best—destabilization via riots and general mayhem. They were quite successful.

Today Chemnitz is marked by two things: the gigantic factory complexes of IEC, Stein & Wassermann and EBM—and the adjacent ghettos.

The ghettos are unique within Germany, because the police have given up controlling them. Rioting and ethnic warfare regularly erupt between Russians, Rumanians, Polish and German Neo-Nazis. Sounds just like home, was?

Besides being a nationalistic hell-hole, the ghetto is also haven to a rising alternative scene. The punks, left-wing radicals and politically-incorrect persons who were pushed out of Berlin all congregated in Chemnitz. Here they built themselves a second *Kreuzberg*, with all the trappings—like frequent demonstrations, squatters and the hottest night-life in Germany. The backstreets of Chemnitz are lined with theatres, alternative cafés and lots of bars.

Chemnitz is especially interesting for all you Rockerboys out there. The special mix of people in the ghetto create an atmosphere that is extremely fertile for artists. *Brown Brown Fox* got famous here, as well as the *Arschgebuiden* and *Klangwand*. The various musical styles the immigrants brought with them play together to create a new Central European Sound. "East-style", as it is called, is just begining to make its mark on the European music scene, but it's the coming thing.

Hamburg

Hamburg suffered greatly from the Greenhouse effect. After it was flooded several times in the years between 1997 and 2000, it became apparent the city would be doomed. The depopulation (caused by the plague) completed the task of emptying the city. EBM then formed a daring plan. Through a series of cut-outs they bought up Hamburg piece by piece. Thanks to rock-bottom land prices, this was a lot less costly than normal. Their plan was create an enclave for business, free of political influence and taxes.

In 2005, Ulf Grünwald's plans bore fruit. He officially proclaimed Hamburg a free state within the EC. The remaining residents were given new passports and nice jobs and resistance was pacified by Mammon. The same year, construction of the Hamburg Wall began; almost 50% of the area covering Hamburg now consisted of a giant dam. Within the wall, EBM constructed the grandest arcology in Europe, a labyrinth of housing districts, power reactor, offices, recreation areas and manufacturing complexes.

It is a *controlled* free city. EBM set standards for employment like high minimum wages and a social-care system. Though it impaired rampant capitalism, EBM had good reason to do so. For

one part, it was good PR. But there were also economic reasons to do so. By setting minimum wages, EBM made sure there was enough money to go around. Early on in the construction EBM offered districts to EBM-friendly corporations. They also made sure space was available for viable middle class enterprises.

The *esprit du corps* in the city is further enhanced by the freedom of its inhabitants. There are stiff fines for racist or destructive behaviour. On the other hand, people are free to do anything else, as long as it doesn't hurt business. EBM Hamburg makes sure no one group collects enough power to be a hazard. Although it doesn't even make the pretense of being a democracy, it is a much more liberal than many so-called democracies.

Of course, there are darker sides to all this. There is a constant chance the government monitors your communication. But this is quite understandable, since they don't want infiltrators or terrorists to get close. Security is handled efficiently as well as discreetly. Perpetrators, if they persist in trouble are first fined, then expelled.

NPC DOSSIER

EDF SOLDIER

NAME: KRIS SCHUMANN

| | | |
|---------|------------|----------|
| INT: 8 | REF: 9 | TECH: 6 |
| COOL: 9 | ATTR: 5 | LUCK: 6 |
| MA: 8 | BODY: 9/11 | EMP: 8/6 |
| AGE: 25 | BTM: -5 | |

SKILLS: *Combat Sense* +4, *Endurance* +2, *Swimming* +3, *Awareness* +5, *Education* +5, *Expert (counter-terrorism tactics)* +2, *Expert (airborne operations)* +2, *Hide/Evade* +3, *Athletics* +3, *Brawling* +2, *Handgun* +3, *Heavy Weapons* +2, *Martial Arts* +4, *Melee* +4, *Rifle* +5, *Stealth* +4, *Submachinegun* +4, *Basic Tech* +3, *Demolitions* +2, *First Aid* +2

CYBERWARE: *Neural Processor*; *Sandevistan Boost*; *Smartgun Link*; *Chipware Socket*; *Nasal Filters*; *Muscle and Bone lace*; *Cyberoptic (I) with Targeting Scope*, *Teleoptics*, *AntiDazzle*, *Thermograph*

Kris was brought up in Munich. Early on he developed an interest in an active lifestyle which led him to extra-curricular cadet training. After school he went on to military college in Berlin, where he specialised in information gathering and anti-terrorism techniques. After graduation he spent two years in the German army before being transferred to the EDF.

Kris is a junior member of one of the central COU units, having transferred there in the last year. In his previous unit he was in reconnaissance and observation. He has yet to develop a speciality in the COU, having only recently completed his standard advanced training.



THE SOUTH



ELLIOTT 99

Timeline for Southern Europe

1997: A freak earthquake with its epicentre in the Bay of Biscay devastates part of the Basque Country. The greatest harm came from the giant tsunami waves that swept the coast, specially the city of Bilbao.

Armed incidents between the Greek army and Turkish refugees. The Turks were fleeing the fall-out from the Meltdown. Increasing strain in the Greece-Turkey relations. Turkey vetoed again from EC.

1998: After the flooding of aid from Spain and the EC, the independentist movement recedes in Euskadi (Basque name for the region). ETA terrorists begin an indefinite truce.

2000: Severe immigration control and draconian measures reduce the spread of the Wasting Plague in the Iberian peninsula to a minimum. Widespread racial violence against African illegal immigrants.

2001: Severe depopulation in Greece as a consequence of the Plague. After the Wasting Plague, there is a loosening of immigration rules. Many arabs come to Greece.

2002: The Portuguese government, to decrease Spanish influence in the country contracts police and defence services to two foreign corporations: Amazonian Security and Arasaka. The "Sell Out" begins with an unconcerned EC.

The Parliamentary system breaks down in Spain when most of the professional politicians are shown to be corrupt. As all the traditional parties fall down there is a movement towards "amateurism" in politics, which combined with yearly elections makes long term decision making impossible.

2003: The volcano Santorin, in the Aegean, erupts. Many islands damaged by the tidal waves. Crete is hardly hit.

2004: Campaign to legalize the situation of the crime syndicates, like the Sicilian Mafia or the Neapolitan Camorra. Instead of working indirectly in politics through bribery and blackmail, they enter it as political parties. As this criminal organizations try to clean their image, other criminal movements appear, like the Nuova Mafia.

2005: Strong corporative pressure to acquire land and concessions. The Greek socialist government menaces with nationalizations.

2006: A military coup tumbles the Greek government. The Prime Minister, Ioannis Lacanos, murdered. The GNRC takes power with corporate backing. It is basically the Joint Staff Chiefs. The surviving government and parliament take refuge in Rhodes, and get Turkish support.

2007: Through 2008, the funds for the reconstruction of Bilbao are re-routed by the government for the 2008 Madrid Summer Olympics. Outrage in the Basque Country.

2008: Through 2010, strong pressure from agricorps to acquire land in Southern Europe. The chaotic Spanish government and the resistance of the small landowners blocks the attempt but the Portuguese government sells its country.

2009: ETA strikes again, in the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympics. A terrorist attack with a grenade launcher hits the authorities tribune. King John Charles I is among the 12 casualties, that also include other members of the Royal House. The future king, Philip VI, survives unharmed. Renewed support of the monarchy and a strong anti-Basque feeling sweep the country.

Seeing the example of Portugal, the North controlled Italian government begins to cede wide areas to corporate interests in southern Italy..

The expansionist policy of the Greek military government fails. They attempt to annex Cyprus and Macedonia, failing in both. Most governments support the exiled government in Rhodes, impeding military actions against it. Rhodes becomes a free port.

2011: Compulsory land sales in Portugal. If the productivity is below the level marked by the Government you have to sell the land. As the Agricorps increase their productivity (by means fair or foul) small landowners are forced to sell.

Most of the productive land of the south of Italy is transferred to corporate control. The northern regions, richer and more industrialized, are not affected.

The Greek military government, economically crippled, begins a new taxation policy to get funds to fight against the partisan movements recently formed. The EC doesn't intervene, but many Megacorps begin to pull out of Greece due to the taxes.

2012: As a reaction to the land sale and the public agitation Italy federalizes in four states: North, Center, South and Insular. Although autonomous, the central government remains strong. The Carabinieri, under government control, become its main enforcement arm.

2013: The Great Drought. Portugal sells itself to avoid bankruptcy. In Spain Andalusia becomes a desert, with thousands of displaced people. Water war between Aragon and Catalonia for the Ebro river. A political problem transforms in a corporate war, and only EC intervention avoids further bloodshed. The population of each region support its claims, and tension runs high.

2014: Through 2018, brain drain in Portugal. Many disowned landholders and rebels against the corporations flee the country. Strong Portuguese communities in Spain and France.

2015: Suppression of agriculture subsidies in Spain. The money is spent in supporting the cities and the coastal touristic zones. First groups of highwaymen appear as a reaction in Andalusia.

Europa Sur appears, an alliance of illegal groups all throughout the Mediterranean Sea, to defend against the EC and Interpol. Soon they control most smuggling and illegal traffic in Southern Europe.

2016: The Bermeo incident, where 127 ecoprotectors were killed by corporate security in the Basque touristic resort of Bermeo. From this point on, ecoactivists begin to carry weapons and ecoterrorism is born.

Rhodes, with the support of most foreign countries, declares its independency as the Hellenic Republic of Rhodes. The EC ignores Greek complaints and recognises the country. The partisans become bolder and now control most of Tessaly.

2018: As a consequence of the terrorist strikes of the Nuova Mafia many areas in the South, specially Calabria, are under martial law. They remain so today.

With Albanian support Greece finally annexes Macedonia. The Serbs react occupying half of Albania. The Turks are not sure who they hate more, Serbs or Greeks, and don't intervene. The stalemate still continues today.

2019: It begins the construction of an ESA orbital lift launcher in the Canary Islands. Spain, a loyal ESA member, is set to receive an enormous influx of money and work opportunities. This may be the last chance to get out of the economic pit.

2020: Two rival candidates compete for the presidency in Portugal. This breakdown of the controlling corporate alliance indicates that some changes are afoot in this country.



SPAIN

POPULATION:30 MILLION
 LITERACY RATE:87%
 MILITARY:207,000
 LANGUAGES: ...FRENCH (OFFICIAL), ENGLISH,
 ARABIC, BRETON, BASQUE,
 GERMAN, FLEMISH, ITALIAN
 ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN, ARAB,
 BASQUE AND OTHERS

—Luis Blasco, History Professor, University of Zaragoza.

Spain is an atypical country in the community. It is in the middle ground between the powerhouses to the North (Germany, France and the Benelux) and the poor relatives (Greece, Ireland and Great Britain). And unlike the Italians they are a strongly pro-community country. Spain is the third community country in number of personnel working in the Eurocracy, after France and Germany.

However its fragmented politics dilutes its community weight in a score directions. The only constant is the anti-french, pro-german attitude shared by most politicians, not only this century, but also earlier ones. Germany pays well for this support, while France oscillates between reprisals and bribery attempts. As a whole this makes Spain the country that receives the biggest part of EC development subsidies, that are quickly spent in keeping the Spanish economy from collapsing.

In this situation the country has been a score years stuck in position, not going down but unable to better its position in Europe. That has happened also with its population kept stable for the last thirty years, even avoiding most of the Wasting Plague.

The Plague was the cause of the most polemic political measure in Spain in the recent time. Spain changed its immigration laws, one of the most permissive in the world, to block entry of foreigners in the country. Only European citizens can get easily in the country. Anybody from a "restricted" country (the U.S.A. are not yet restricted, although there has been pressure in that direction) cannot even make a pleasure or tourism trip to Spain. The *Guardia Civil* has free rein when dealing with illegal immigrants, which means that usually deportation is not necessary. Although many European youth prefer the rough and tumble (compared with their home towns) but orderly situation in Spain, most tourists have shifted their interest to Portugal, and the touristic trade has suffered.

Most recent history has been a succession of lost opportunities and a turning back to the past. Recently has come the chance to recover part of the lost opportunity, when Spain had the only orbital massdriver in the Canary Islands, with the pro-

ject of enlarging the old canarian facilities, to make ESA independent of Orbital Air resources and keeping valuable assets in European soil.

Despite this attempts to get the country in the XXI century, when most Europeans think about Spain, they are thinking about the old topics: bullfights (incredibly popular, famous *toreros* are better known than the politicians), bandits (a recent phenomenon) and flamenco (the real flamenco is extinct, and only the tourists version remains). The fact that it has the higher number of university graduates in Europe is ignored.

The truth is (and has been a constant in Spanish literature for two centuries) that there are two Spains. The first one is the typically mediterranean, with a happy-go-lucky attitude, disdain of work, and lack of foresight. The second is the hard working, competitive part that coexists (usually in the same individual) with the other, supporting it.

Spain is an excellent place to have a good time (if you can mix with the natives) but remember that your drinking buddy yesterday will be after your skin today. This dramatical change, when the bumbling fool you meet becomes a dedicated adversary for good or bad, has been termed by foreigners the *Furia Española*, that inner strength, combination of pride and hidden competence, that has allowed Spaniards to achieve their goals for centuries.

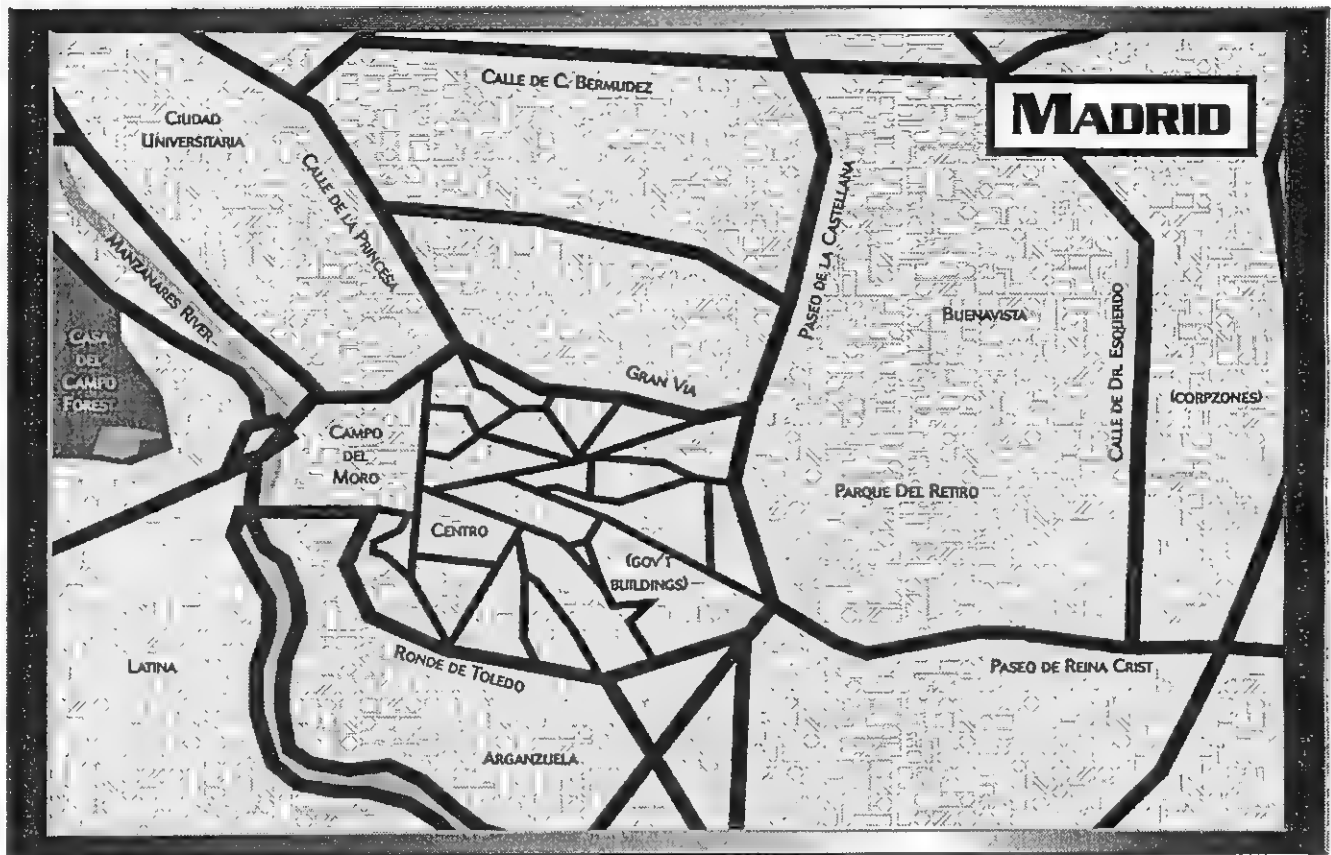
Now the *furia* appears at the personal level, and many Spaniards are at high levels in the Eurocracy. The collective spirit it has been lost and there is a strong tendency to pride in past achievements instead of striving for more. This focus in the past also has ressurected many old conflicts and nationalisms that look outdated in the XXI century, as the Water War, or the resurgence of the Basque nationalism, or that new cliché, the Andalusian bandits.

Their existence is a return to the old Spanish reaction against any government: get your gun and fight. Of course a man needs to eat, so you "liberate" resources to keep the fight. Soon it becomes a way of life, and the original cause is forgotten. The bandits appeared when the government suppressed the Rural Employment Plan, actually an unemployment salary for the depressed agricultural regions in the South. Enraged for the disappearance of what they saw as a right, many people took the arms. As the rural communities support and are supported by the bandits they will be very difficult to eradicate. The lack of decisiveness of Madrid's government only worsens the situation.

REGIONAL GUIDE

Madrid

Once capital of half the world, before London usurped it, and signs of this past glory still remain. Although it is the only peninsular city close to becoming a metropolis, the core of the



city has remained unchanged for years. All slums and poorer areas are in the periphery, and the city centre is dedicated to cultural centres, museums, government buildings, residences and those two national passions: shopping and carousing. The fact that there are old residences all around the city centre (and not only for the wealthy) gives Southern European cities their peculiar flavour. The streets are crowded by pedestrians and vehicles alike, at all times night and day. The old Spanish tradition of a bar every ten metres and staying up late (really late) get to the most in the "Old Madrid". Although there are a few violent elements, specially ultranationalist groups and football (soccer) fans (usually the same people), most people are out to have some fun.

With the enormous EC subsidies to keep the economy from collapsing most people have little to do and time to spare, so most people make their most to enjoy life.

Foreigners will notice the limited police presence and security. Most security is concentrated in the accesses to the city, with inconspicuous presence in the city centre itself. People will be very friendly to strangers if they are clearly Europeans or Americans (having less prejudice than others) and delighting at attempts to speak Spanish. Africans, specially Arabs, will have a worse time, and may be harassed by radical nationalists.

The lack of a strong government has made Madrid a favored point for European offices of many corporations, helped by the cheap (by EC standards) cost of living. Madrid is considered a preferred assignment, so corporation executives in Madrid will usually perform better than average.

The strong nationalist elements ensure that most monuments (there are many) are free of graffiti and other decorations, unlike other European cities. Getting caught usually means being thrown to the Manzanares River (almost dry and heavily polluted).

Most large cities are similar to Madrid, without the poorer outlying areas and lesser size. This high lifestyle in the cities is supported by the poverty in the country areas and the EC help.

After the partial sinking of Barcelona and Valencia, and the devastation of Bilbao, the main Spanish cities are Seville and Saragossa, together with *Barcelona Nova* (New Barcelona).

New Barcelona

This place grew from the refugees of Barcelona. It is the most modern city in Spain, and the focus of the strong catalanist pride. Barcelona Nova is packed with environmentally aware arcologies, architecture integrated with natural formations and carefully-delineated cityzones. However, there are cer-



tain sections of the city which are still "old Barcelona," and these can be decrepit and dangerous.

Seville

Poorer than other cities, due to the sorry state Andalusia is in, and sometimes it is isolated for days if the airport closes, due to the brigands' control of Sierra Morena.

Saragossa

A middle point between the economic centers of the country, Madrid and Catalonia. Saragossa was strengthened by the victory of Aragonese interests in the Water War, and is a growing industrial centre.

Tenerife

The newest Spanish city, merits Special focus. Taking the place of the old Santa Cruz de Tenerife, a city built for and by the mass driver construction in Mount Teide (12190 ft). It is surrounded by the slums of the construction workers and has a glass and metal heart, pumping the EC and corporate blood money. Although ESA is not the only player, is the main one, although Interpol and Netwatch have strong presences, as does the *Guardia Civil*. Every week there is a supposed attack from Orbital Air, usually from the net, but the work progresses steadily. A proof of the importance of the islands is the presence of the second Spanish LDL, while many EC countries have none.



PORTUGAL

POPULATION:9.5 MILLION

LITERACY RATE:89%

MILITARY:50,000 (NON-NATIVE,
ALL CORPORATE SECURITY)

LANGUAGES:PORTUGUESE (OFFICIAL),
FRENCH, ENGLISH, BERBER

ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN, ARAB
AND OTHERS

—Luis Blasco, History Professor, University of Zaragoza.
If there is one thing which characterizes 2020 Portuguese society, it's conformism. Portugal is the showcase of what would megacorps do if they controlled the world, and the worst of it is that it is not totally bad.

There is no Portuguese government as such. Rather half a dozen corporations (Arasaka, Amazonian Service and Security, WNS, Iberian AgroIndustrials, Metropolitan Merchant Finance and Oliveira-Leisure) control the country. The EC allows it because the specific weight of Portugal in Europe is insignificant and the balance is not affected.

In Portugal life is serene and quiet. The "Government" subsidizes almost everything, from food to television, and all you have to do is to carry out your job, assigned according to your qualifications profile, intended to be manageable. The EC charter forces Portugal borders to be open without restrictions for any community products, but it is difficult to sell something if the shops will not accept it, and the advertisement bubble of WNS does not cover it. It is the biggest experiment with a captive market in history.

And the market is steadily growing. The serene and calm atmosphere Arasaka strives so hard to achieve (and woe to anybody who interferes with it, as his family will never recover his body) attracts the third age tourism, as they value quiet over freedom, and many corporate tourists too. The death of the Mediterranean tourism industry has been an added plus, so now the European pensioners flock to the clear beaches and orderly urbanizations in the country.

Any rebel against the system will be "reeducated" to purge any antisocial behaviour. The fact that those who survive reeducation suffer physical and psychological problems is a small price to pay for the common good.

Not all Portuguese people have folded to corporate interests, although few remain in Portugal proper. The most daring operate from Spain, using pirate stations to interfere with official channels or smuggling restricted material (from books to



weapons). Many joined Europa Sur, and most have simply traveled to other EC countries, enjoying the rights of European citizens. From 2010 to 2018 almost a million people left the country. There are Portuguese areas in most cities, and hundreds of small eurocrats (without the political clout to reach the high positions, but supporting each other) are beginning to prepare EC intervention in the country.

The situation has complicated recently, because the controlling corporative alliance has broken in two factions, disagreeing in the way to split the cake. The corporative party (The Consensual Progress Party) has two candidates to the presidency, each of them supported by three of the controlling corps (Iberian AgroIndustrial, Amazonian Security and WNS against Merchant, Arasaka and Oliveira-Leisure). The first attempts to restore harmony have failed, and it may be the beginning of a new corporate war, one where is real state to fight for, and two corps (Amazonian and Arasaka) with the mil-

itary resources necessary. This may be the excuse the EC needed to intervene.

REGIONAL GUIDE

Lisbon

The touristical emphasis of the new Portuguese government has made Lisbon a showcase of the regime, turning it into a beautiful city, but a dead one, with no life of its own. Great measures have been taken, including building giant dykes to avoid the flooding that affects so many coastal cities.

Coimbra

The only city with some flavour left. A university city and a hotbed of opposition, frequently rocked by street riots. Part of the disagreement between the two corporate blocks that run the country is in the matter of closing or not the university. Arasaka, of course, is pro closing.

ITALY

POPULATION:55.3 MILLION

LITERACY RATE:99%

MILITARY:312,000

LANGUAGES:ITALIAN (OFFICIAL), FRENCH,

GERMAN, ENGLISH, VARIOUS SLAVIC

ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN, SLAVIC

—Carlo Nuzzo, anchorman, RAI 2 TV (supposedly state-controlled), Rome.

Italy is a country that has been hampered in its recent history by a great problem, the existence in the southern region, of popular criminal organisations: the Neapolitan Camorra and the Sicilian Mafia. These traditional organisations have recently made a quantitative leap forward. In an attempt to achieve local control of the federal government they have been constituted as political parties. Even though most of their businesses have been legalised (after all, the government decides what is legal or not), the access to political power enables them to perform a higher level of corrupt deal. The fact that Mafia-controlled areas seem better off than other parts of the south (sold to the corporate wolves) has strengthened and expanded their hold.

In a movement that everybody expected for years, Italy is now a federated republic, with a president, a prime minister (the real power) and a democratic parliament. The main difference is the division into four states, each fairly autonomous in its interior politics. The states are:

•**North Italy.** Includes Lombardy, Veneto, Genua, Piemonte, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. The richest state. Capital: Milan. Ruled by a centrist-corporate coalition, it also controls the National Congress.

•**Centre Italy.** Rome, Lazio, Marche and Umbria. Capital: Rome. The centrist(!) government.

•**South Italia.** Formed by Naples, Apulia and Basilicata. Capital: Naples. Ruled by the Camorra, but with many corporate exclusion areas, where the corps have absolute rule.

•**The Insular Region.** Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia. Capital: Palermo. Mafia-controlled.

The north is the richest and most industrialised part of Italy, trying to get their rightful place in Euroheaven. They embrace many of the German ideals. The centrist-corporate coalition that is the real power in the country is controlled by Biotechnica and Montedison, the foremost Italian corporations. The general feeling is that their work keeps the Mafia rich, and their lazy Neapolitan cousins, fed. Milan is one of the richest, most expensive and most secure cities in the world, but due to the terrorist threat, the police presence is suffocating the rich intellectual and social life. If nobody intervenes, we could be approaching a police state.

Their neighbours of the central region are an extension of the North, but with a more moderate viewpoint on everything, due to their longer contact with the south. Here is Rome, a world in itself, and capital of the *Repubblica*. The government is usually a puppet of the north, but a strong display of public agitation by the Romans can change almost any political decision.

The south is the worst off. Full of resentment against the north and the corporations, and with the worst unemployment problem in the EC, it is not strange that institutionalised crime is well-developed. Despite their social support, the Camorra, controlling power in the state, has betrayed its people, selling itself to the megacorps that control the land and the industry. The popular resistance movements have coalesced into the *Nuova Mafia*, a mix of criminal organisation (financing itself with kidnappings, blackmail and drug traffic)



and political movement (anti-corporate nationalism). They are secretly supported on occasion by the Mafia and the Camorra—so long as the targets are corporations and the central government. As a result, there are more deaths during a bad week-end in Naples than in the London combat zone, and the violence is spreading throughout Italy. A corporate in this area would do well to restrict themselves to corporate-secure areas. Many tourists are kidnapped each day, and the custom is to send pieces of the victim to show that you have him...

The insular region (including Calabria) is the most closed to outside influence. The corporations preferred to stay clear, avoiding the now-legal hold of the *Mafia*. The *Mafiosi* have returned to their origins as men of honour, and social support is high in Sicily. Sardinians feel as far from their government as ever, but they are used to it. After a bloody takeover, with hundreds of deaths, Calabria is almost a conquered province, and the only part in the state where the *Nuova Mafia* has taken hold, using the remnants of the vanquished *N'Drangheta*. The traditional vineyards and olive groves, together with trade, are the basis of the economy. Virtually self-supporting, as is the *Mafia* wish. The smugglers of Europa Sur are well-represented here.

The Mafia kept most corporations out of Sicily, but Sardinia and much of the south are corporate controlled. The Camorra has shown greater greed than its Sicilian cousins, and its popular support is weaker. The north, who expected a Portugal-like transformation of the south, has returned to meddling with their politics—as a result, terrorism is again commonplace in Italian cities. The Land Confiscation Act of 2010 was the current starting point of this conflict, but the roots lie centuries past.

In these regions, there is practically one party, as any political opposition meets an untimely end. Agitators are warned.

Despite the political tension, the normal Italian is an extroverted person, evading the grim reality through TV, friends, family, and sports; especially Il Calcio (soccer), the national passion in Italy, and the only unifying factor remaining. Foreigners will find many people willing to go out of their way to help them with any problem. This is specially true in the centre region, but even a dour Milanese or a silent Sicilian will help a lady in distress. Another constant is elegance. Italians are very concerned about their external image, and are always as sharply-dressed as possible. The Italian fashionmakers are at the forefront of couture, disdaining the faded glories of France. In Rome and Milan, fashion changes each week, and any self-conscious edgerunner should keep ahead.

However, the "life as usual" mindset in Italy is threatened, and the typical "unstable stability" of Italian politics may disappear again. The nationalistic polarisation, combined with the terrorist agitation may be too much for the strained country. The *Nuova Mafia* agitation may be the last straw against Italian unity. Stay tuned to the RAI Due.



REGIONAL GUIDE

Milan

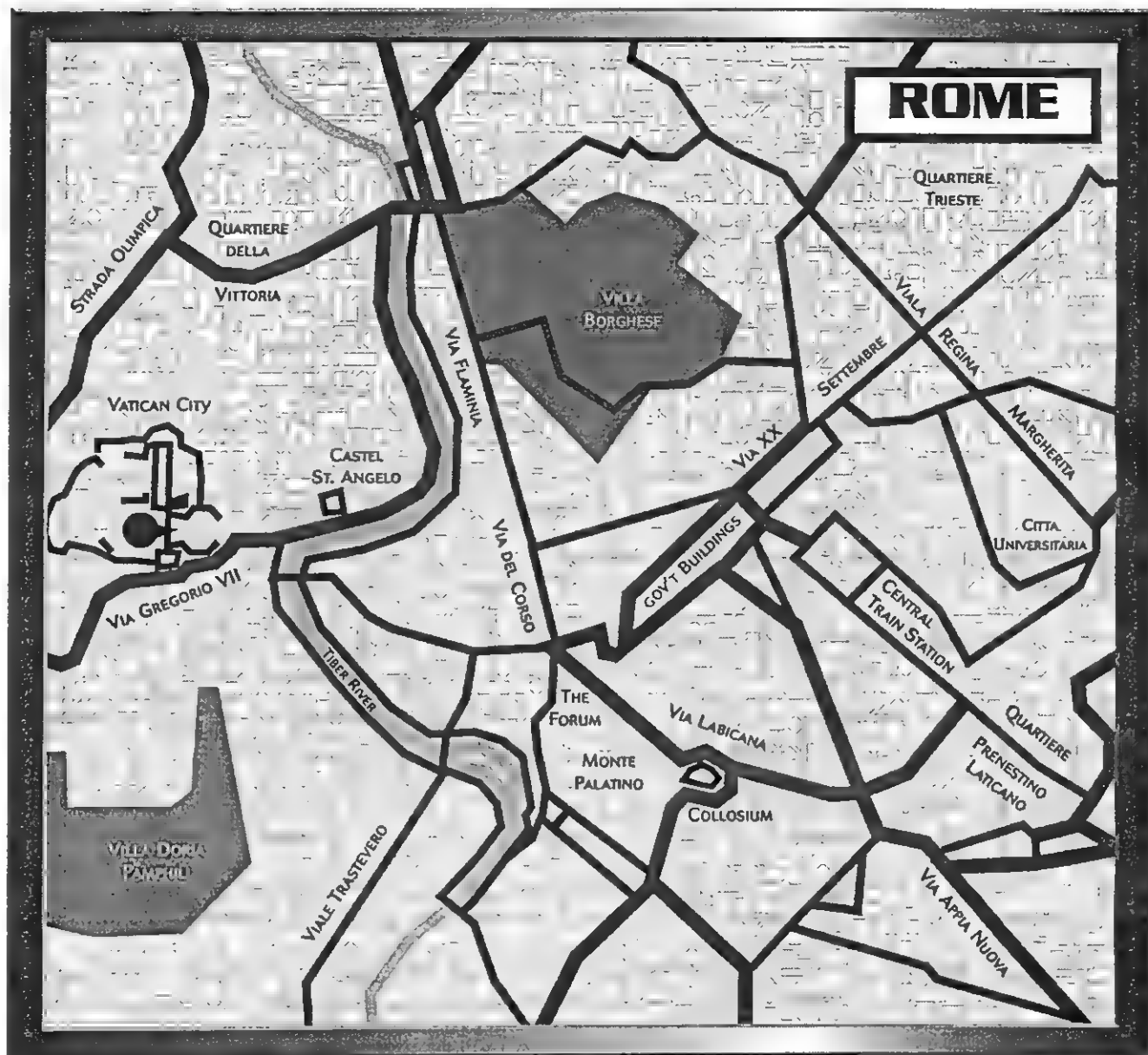
The capital of Lombardy, now controller of the North state. Although overshadowed by Rome, the new kings, corporate movers and shakers, are here. It is the economic centre, the controller of the banks, trade and industry of the whole country.

Unlike most Italian cities, it is a secure place. Terrorists have learned the risks of preparing a strike here. This blanket of security hampers most corporate-deniable work as well. Netwatch and Interpol have a high presence here. The visitor will bore herself to death if she has not come here to wheel and deal in the corridors of power.

Naples

South state capital, it is the most dangerous city in Italy, and possibly in continental Europe. Robberies and assaults are commonplace, and caution is recommended. Don't forget that the main income of the *Nuova Mafia* is kidnapping. The *Camorra* government is trying to secure the streets, but has only managed to turn them into a battlefield. Since 2019, there has been a curfew from 22:00 to 5:00, but nobody respects it.

After losing the fishing income, sea trade is the main industry of the city. You can get a ship willing to go anywhere and to do almost anything, if you have enough money. Europa Sur has



a strong presence in the docks, but their relationship with the Camorra is strained, and violence may flare.

Palermo

Power centre of the *Mafia*, the city is quiet. No illegal actions are allowed unless government-sanctioned, and then they are not illegal. Foreigners will be distrusted, not spoken to, and probably harassed by young toughs.

Venice, Florence, etc.

All the monumental Italian cities are kept just-so by huge subsidies from the EC and the work of Wortrac Consortium, controlling almost all tourism in continental Italy.

Rome

Capital of the Central State and of all Italy. A professional work now in decadence, "The Eternal City" is everything a city can be. All ways go to Rome, but our Rome is not what it was. Dirty and chaotic, nevertheless tourism is one of its main sources of income. Any visitor will be awed by monuments of all times. History weighs heavily here.

However, Romans seem immune to it. If Italians are an extroverted and open people, Romans are such, but squared. You will meet hospitable, friendly persons wherever you go. It is easy to meet new people, but hard to form strong friendships. It is usual to be approached by a stranger that stops and begins to tell you his life, speaking so fast that it is doubtful he even speaks in Italian.



Rome has no traffic rules. Italian traffic control (and respect for regulations) is scarce, but in Rome it is ignored. It is normal to see cars taking a roundabout both ways at the same time. Taking a taxi is not recommended for the weak-hearted, but it is the only way besides walking to get where you want to go.

Rome is nevertheless weathering well the threat to its supremacy presented by Milan, and it is still the most important city in Italy, combining the rigid and laborious people of the North and the relaxed attitude of the South.

GREECE

POPULATION:10.3 MILLION
 LITERACY RATE:93%
 MILITARY:135,300
 LANGUAGES:GREEK (OFFICIAL), ITALIAN,
 ENGLISH, TURKISH, VARIOUS SLAVIC
 ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN,
 SLAVIC, TURKOMAN

—John Scott, Recruiting agent, EBM-Greece, Athens

The proud Greek heritage is certainly in poor hands. Only Great Britain is worse, and that is because the British have always been somewhat feudal.

The democratic government survived the Wasting Plague crisis and even (barely) the Santorin catastrophe, but could not handle the corporations. It is ironic that the corps that put the army on top had to quit the country due to tax pressure. Now, most corp offices are small, with administrative and trade missions, not manufacturing. The only big offices are for military hardware corporations, who sell toys to the GNRC (Greek National Reconciliation Caucus).

The army has held sway over Greece for many years, but as usual, the independent-minded Greeks are not going to make it easier for them. The countryside is mostly under partisan control, and only through the big cities and along heavily-patrolled highways, can the army move. However, that same independence precludes the many resistance movements from working together. Instead they quibble among themselves while the GNRC accounts in Switzerland swell.

That's another Greek characteristic, found mostly in cities: the idea that everything has a price, or, with enough dough, you can get anything. This is what keeps the army in the cities, where you can make money, and why the resistance movements are rural.

Meanwhile, the exiled parliament (the thirty-odd survivors, now the theme of dozens of sim shows) still works from Rhodes. Unable to call elections, they are supported by some of the partisan movements—and specially by Turkey and most non-European countries, delighted at seeing Europeans back at their

At the centre of the city are the Vatican States, focal point for Catholicism and the site of the Pope's temporal power. Catholics from all around the world congregate here to see the heir of St. Peter. Besides the greatest concentration of religious art in the world, there are many other treasures, as well. But don't be deceived by the apparent lack of security. Besides the fellows with the halberds, the Swiss Guard is one of the best-prepared military forces in the world. And the Church has recently softened their position towards cybernetic enhancements...

favorite historical sport: killing each other.

The greatest show this way is the campaign in Macedonia. Instead of securing the neighbourhood of Lake Prespa, the Greek army is facing hardened Serb veterans, currently occupying part of Albania, a Greek ally. As they disapproved of the Macedonian venture, the EC won't intervene outside Greek borders, but Serbia is still unwilling to commit themselves against an EC member, and the war is just skirmishes at the moment. A good work opportunity for soldiers and solos. This military venture has weakened the army further, and now most of Thessaly and the north of Greece (including part of Greek Macedonia) are under rebel control. It is widely thought that American and Japanese interests are supplying the partisans, but there is no definite proof.

Meanwhile, corruption, the black market and rationing are the usual fare in the military-controlled areas. Europa Sur has a strong presence here, but there are hundreds of small-time operations, from famous-label clothing counterfeits to synthetic analogs of the latest fashion drugs.

Greeks, gloom aside, are a peculiar lot. Very sanguineous, they are a passionate people. They might kill each other over a slight, but they will stop military ops to organize a wedding, for instance. If you contract a Greek (and I should know) he will try to cheat you blind in negotiations, but later, will fulfill your agreement to the letter. There are no better friends—nor worse enemies.

A warning to all female readers, Greek males, and even females, practice machism, and women will be discriminated against unconsciously. In the cities there is a bit more equality, but the only equal employers are foreign corporations. This can be good or bad, and you probably know how to take advantage of it.

Greece has become the hiring-hall of Europe, and Athens is still one of the greatest touristic cities in the world. Don't worry if you can't get a language chip for Modern Greek, most people, specially taxists, waiters, etc. speak a smattering of European languages, including many obscure ones. Although you won't be able to talk about literature, you can get your basic needs across (food, rest, ammo...). For those that think that Greece is a police state, well, the answer is yes, but here the police are bribable, and seldom bother foreigners who mind their own business. If you have other businesses in mind, remember that the police are usually judge, jury and executioner here; tread with care.





GREECE: The Back Door to Greater Europe

—Maurizio Sforza, South Europe Export/Import, Gibraltar.

Traditionally, it has never been hard to get into Europe. France, Great Britain and the Netherlands automatically received citizens of their former colonies; Spain sheltered any Hispanoamericans that crossed the ocean. Portugal accepted Brazilians.

The Wasting Plague changed all this, although the border-closing trend had begun earlier. Now foreigners must pass rigorous scrutiny to get in, even with a tourist visa. Work permits are very hard to get, and citizenship is almost unattainable for a foreigner. Certain nationalities are specially controlled, for various reasons, and will bring higher official interest: USA, Japan, New Africa, China and all Arab countries.

However, to help the discerning entrepreneur, Europe has two soft spots allowing foreigners into the Euroheaven. One of them, Great Britain, has its own risks—and so many disadvantages that I won't extend myself on it. The other, though far from perfect, is the best way into Europe if your intention isn't tourism, but mayhem: Greece.

Corruption rules Greece, and that's why there are so many Greeks up in the mountains. With enough money (Eb only) and the right attitude, *amici*, you can get anything here. Regarding

the particular problem of getting into the EC, there are several possibilities.

If you have a substantial amount of money (corporate backing perhaps?) the best way is by plane, via Athens airport. Get a tourist visa (an "on the spot" visa costs between 1000 and 10,000 Euro) and renew it as needed (when asked, or every three months in serious parts of Europe). Any equipment you got onto the plane can pass through customs, with a "tax" depending on what the customs agent *thinks* you carry. (Drugs: 500-5000; weapons, handguns: 100-500; military weapons: 1000-10000; heavy weapons: 5000+; cyberdeck: 1000; black cyberware: 200-2000 plus cost of weapon if applicable. *Streetwise* and *Streetdeal* don't lower the prices, but tell you the right amount within the range in advance.)

With a tourist visa you can't receive legally payment for rendered services, so set up an account in advance in some tax haven.

If you are so notorious you can't get aboard a plane, or you're cash poor, there are other possibilities.

The preferred way to get cargo (and people) in cheaply is by ship. There are so many islands in the Aegean you can't control them all. So you just board a ship for Greece (the right kind of ship, *Streetdeal* or *Streetwise* 15+) in Cairo, or Tunis, or Shanghai or... Usually the ship will require a 200-500eb supplement to get you ashore without notifying customs, but even if you are caught, a clear head and a few hundred euro will save your butt. There're many people in Greece willing to give work to paperless people, although none of these jobs are pleasant. Work hard and you might get a temp work permit from the EC. The best forgers are close to Athens, and they are good because they use real documents (sometimes working as bureaucrats in the actual agencies!), so you can legalise your papers once you get some money.

The third way is by land. Its main advantage is that it is less used. Go to Turkey (land of few regulations) or the Balkans (more dangerous), and contact one of the many border-crossing operations. Most of them supply the partisan movements in northern Greece, but that may be a useful cover. If you are anti-EC or pro-independance (or can fake it), this is your ticket. Many of these ops will get you through free, and they can handle the papers problem for undercover work.

Getting into Greece is only half the problem. Now you have to avoid problems with the military police, get a job, and remember that Interpol are no fools. They know the hole they have in Greece, so anybody coming from there will be screened more tightly than other Euros, although much less than your typical American straight from NY.

The porous nature of the Greek border has turned it into the perfect way-station for mercenaries. Anybody can get to Greece, you can buy anything you need there, and you can take refuge afterwards. This is the favourite hiring place in Europe for deni-



able operations, surgical strikes or paramilitary operations all around the world. Remember that high expenses make gains from these ops a bit low, and danger tends to be a bit high, but if you make it here, you can make it anywhere, as they say.

On a side note, Greece is very popular with netrunners, as Netwatch presence is low, and response teams after a trace are slow and bribable.

Grèce is also a good place to get out of Europe. Its geographic position is close to Asia and Africa, and if you tickle the GNRC, or the partisans, or EBM, you can leave the same way you got in. And remember, if you need to get in or out in a hurry contact me...*(Rest of transmission deleted. Remember Mauri, no ads. Ed.)*

REGIONAL GUIDE

Athens

This city, inhabited continuously for four thousand years, is where democracy first appeared as a political system. Athens was for centuries, the intellectual capital of the Old World. Their advances in architecture, sculpture and philosophy constitute the base of our modern world.

Now, however, its population is 33% of the total of Greece. This uncontrolled expansion has resulted in chaos, where urban and rural features coexist without any order:

TURKEY

POPULATION:9.5 MILLION

LITERACY RATE:89%

MILITARY:50,000 (NON-NATIVE,
ALL CORP SECURITY)

LANGUAGES: ...TURKISH (OFFICIAL), FRENCH,
RUSSIAN, ARABIC, VARIOUS SLAVIC

ETHNIC GROUPS:TURKOMAN, KURDISH,
ARAB AND OTHERS

—Odysseos Kanantzidis, Athens correspondent, Herald Tribune.

OVERVIEW

This is a Muslim state, leave your x-rated braindances at home. You gotta understand, this paranoid government can't think of anything but restrictions.

From the Crash of '94, Turkey lost their NATO/EC aid. The poor sought help in the cities; forming shanty towns ringing Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. And their number rose fast. Within thirty minutes, the Meltdown turned Turkey's southern neighbors into radioactive wastelands. In 24 hours, refugees invaded the

goats feed in vacant lots, you can find wagons among the dense traffic of the avenues, and elegant fashion shops rest alongside turkish-style bazaars.

The main support of Athens today is tourism, real and illegal (high-risk operatives are traditionally big spenders). All touristic areas are high-security, with military police conspicuously present. The other great source of income is trade, and as illegal trade brings more income than legal, it is highly popular here. There is also a brisk forgery industry, copying anything from Chinese passports to Nike Citymasters, along with weapons and drugs. They even make cheaper polymer one-shots!

At night, if you avoid the tourists-only areas and the curfew, you can find the friendliest people of Europe (if you behave properly). Women will have to bear continuous propositions, however.

Rhodes

An island in the Aegean, where the democratic remnants took refuge in 2007. Under the protection of the Turkish Air Force, the island seceded from Greece, and later (2016), became independent. The only source of money is trade and its status as a tax and data haven. The island is a lawless place, where only private-security guarded houses and the druglords' mansions are secure. Europa Sur has its headquarters here, but there is a strong movement (St. John Knights) trying to clear the island of criminal elements. A confrontation seems inevitable.

country. Some stayed in the big cities, bolstering the poor already there. Most moved on to assail the borders of Bulgaria and Greece. The EC pressured Turkey to stem the flow of refugees, but the sheer numbers rendered control efforts futile. So the EC reinforced the borders of Bulgaria and Greece, and illegals were shot on the spot; the numbers killed were astronomical.

The government was beleaguered by refugees, Easies and muslim fanatics. The last straw was Major General Özcül's coup d'état. By luck, the parliament survived that coup—and the seven that followed. Their reaction was to increase the controls. What they feared most were the religious fanatics. As a result, they banned all those fine things forbidden by Islam. The military took over street patrol. The media wasn't free to voice their opinions even before the catastrophe, so little change there. All in all, the government kept control of the country by strangling it. At least they checked the Wasting Plague. It only killed some fifty thousand poor.

After all this history biz, you probably want to know what the place looks like now. Imagine cities where an Imam calls to prayer thrice a day. Where poor people fight for the slightest scraps of food—and where crowded streets empty at the sight of military patrols. Imagine grand palaces of oil kings sitting alongside the shanty towns.

The big cities really suck, but the countryside's no better. Much of the cropland was washed in radioactive fallout; farmers



foolish enough to stay often have malformed children. The hills, well, the hills and mountains are infested with rebels and renegades of all kinds, from nationalist Kurds, to desperate refugees, to religious fanatics trying to create their own little kingdoms. This is not the place for a holiday trip.

GOVERNMENT

The only way to govern this hellhole is with an iron hand. The few reforms actually implemented have been kicked aside to keep the fundamentalists satisfied. The unsatisfied tend to vanish into the back room of some police station. And there are a lot of people vanishing these days. Even so, the city intelligentsia stubbornly shout for democratic reforms. Mind you, Turkey isn't only fanatics and beggars, there are a few universities producing in-demand engineers and scientists; most propagate a secular approach to Islam. The government hates them because they are actively critical—and they know the country can't afford to lose them. If you're a student, you enjoy a kind of fool's freedom—so long as you don't shout too loud.

But, the way the M.P. behaves in the cities is nothing compared to what the army does in the countryside. For years now, they have waged war on the 'rebels' taking refuge in the mountains. There are Kurds still trying for independence and 'lost' sects ruling valleys.

Anyway, the government also has to deal with the EC, like it or not, they need the cheap food to survive. In return for regular supplies, they sold the Taurus and Canik mountains to EC power companies. The Easies are looking for new resources; especially after the Meltdown. So they set up hundreds of wind-power generators defended by EDF troopers. Naturally, the Easie troops regularly clash with the folk living there. Not that I believe gun-toting horse riders are a match for combat AV's, but who knows, we all remember Afghanistan, right?

Economy

Turkey depends on food imports like a junkie depends on 'Dorphs.

If you're lucky, you get food from EC stock. If you're not so lucky, you have to scrounge to pay the outrageous black market prices. Those who are really down'n'out eat rats. These people pay premium cash for Bulgarian kibble, man.

So how do you get in on EC imports? It's obvious—you know the right people. Most officials are partially paid in kind, and sell their excess to relatives, who in turn, sell it on the black market. Another way is to give customs some baksheesh in form of eurobucks or rare goods.

As far as I know, things may get better. The parliament is talking with Bulgarian food producers through a series of cut-outs, aiming is to build up a new food industry. Since they don't have much arable land anymore, they've settled for kibble. Well, at least it gets the kids off chasing rats.

REGIONAL GUIDE

Istanbul

This is probably the worst hell-hole this side of Calcutta. Even though it's probably the biggest black market in Europe, it lacks true style and tech.

When you get to Istanbul via plane, you notice there are no windows on the outer faces of the buildings. Reason is, the airport is surrounded by slums worse than Night City. If you get there by ship, you'll be docking in a combat zone. Officially, the docks are firmly under government control. That's a laugh. You'll see armored cop cruisers collecting protection from the local gangs. They keep an eye on foreign traders, otherwise, you're on your own.

The Haven district is the best place to stay if you're doing biz. Smugglers bring in food, illegal hardware and drugs every day. The food's from EC stock, so you're well advised to get it there, than try eating the abominable street food. If you don't have contacts, watch the vendors. If they have foreign regulars, the food is edible, though not necessarily tasty. Also stay away from drugs you didn't analyze beforehand. Most junk is second-rate Bulgarian; miles above the dirt they produce here, still, analyzers are a good investment. I lived for two months renting mine to junkies...

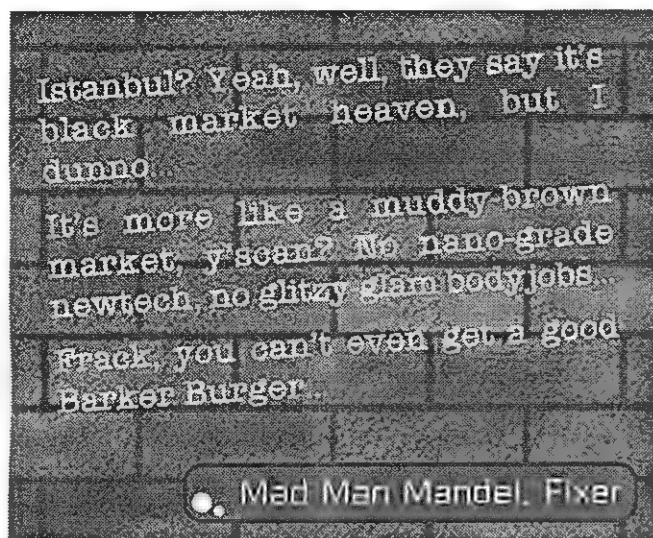
Cyber here is bloody expensive. Fixers demand prime-rate Chiba prices for Rostovic and Poland Cyber Tech goods. Then again, if you plan on staying in Istanbul, that's no problem. You don't deal with metalheads here. Either they don't have the cash or they're muslims. On the one hand, they can kill their girl-friends without blinking an eye. On the other hand, they think cyberware is heresy. So my best advice is to shroud open 'ware as best you can. I once saw a riksha runner who was making real money with his plastic legs. That is, until he crossed those religious boys. They ripped his legs off and left him in the street.

Rikshas are the preferred method of travel. The streets are so small it's the only viable form of taxi. Those streets large enough for cars are either too crowded or the pavement is wasted. Riksha runners are also a good source of info; they go nearly everywhere and they see everyone.

Oh, yeah, for you ladies out there. Bring a veil. It'll save you from messy confrontations with fundamentalists.

Sure, the docks and slums aren't the only sides of the city. There's the quarters of the rich. They own the mansions that were built when the Ottoman Empire still ruled southern Europe. I've been invited to one of those places. It's like another world, gleaming with marble and gold. I mean, my benefactor had three Net jocks in his personal entourage, along with several hundred meatboys and a dozen courtesans. Luxury is not a word in their vocabulary, they *live* it. Once you're on the good side of the sheiks, you've made it. But never step out of line. Life is as cheap as bar of kibble...





AFRICAN AND MED CONNECTIONS

—Eduardo Zubizarreta, Ship Captain, Transmediterranea.

The Mediterranean Sea (the "Med") is a dead sea and yet thriving with life (like maggots in a corpse). Its pollution problems root back a long time, since the countries in its shores became industrialized. But the recent situation has worsened. The number of near misses in the Meltdown War that fell into the sea, combined with fall-out from the hits, has given the sea serious background radiation. Only mutated lifeforms and algae live in it. The tendency towards robotic ships in the Med is not only a matter of economics, but some reluctance to spend too much time in the waters. Only smugglers risk cancer for profit.

The death of the sea also ruined the touristic industries of Italy, Greece, part of France, and Spain, although these two countries have shifted tourism to their Atlantic coasts. The great winner is Portugal, holiday heaven of corporate Europe. What has been lost in tourism has however been made up in trade.

The Iberian peninsula, despite its strategic position at one end of the Mediterranean Sea, had never benefited too much from trade. However, the EC has changed that. In an attempt to reduce the importance of Marseille, and aided by the closing of many British ports, the Spanish ports have flourished. Although Barcelona lost part of the city to the sea, other towns, such as Cartagena or Cadiz, have improved their port facilities.

Almost all Greek trade is by ship, as the Balkans and even Greece itself, is dangerous for cargo traffic. Also, Suez is the main route to Far East markets, and traffic is heavy in both directions. Corporate control of Suez has enhanced its performance, and most ships go through instead of going around the Cape of Good Hope. All this ship traffic is concentrated

towards the Western Med, with the golden triangle of Marseilles, Genoa and Cartagena.

Although the Med trade has increased tenfold, the diminished trade with America and Great Britain has affected the Atlantic trade, closing down ports. Only Lisbon and Porto, with their corporate subsidized freighters, keep a brisk trade with Japan and Brazil.

Spain has also been for centuries the gateway to North Africa. Now that the surviving Magreb countries are EC puppets this role has increased. Most cargo goes through ferries in the Gibraltar strait, but the wagonloads of cheap North African labourers, willing to suffer the Europeans contempt to earn some money, must go through Greece as the Spanish immigration law and police are incredibly severe (EC citizens are just waved through). Recently the charges against a Spanish Navy officer for sinking three boats full of illegal immigrants were dropped due to "lack of living witnesses". This harsh attitude is what makes the discerning operative prefers Greece as an entry point in Europe.

The old oleoduct that crossed Spain to supply the American Military Bases in Europe has been refurbished and expanded, going through France into the Ruhr area. Cartagena has become the main entry point for fuels, either from the Middle East or Petrochem (U.S.A.). Only SovOil, with its own oleoduct, bypasses it.

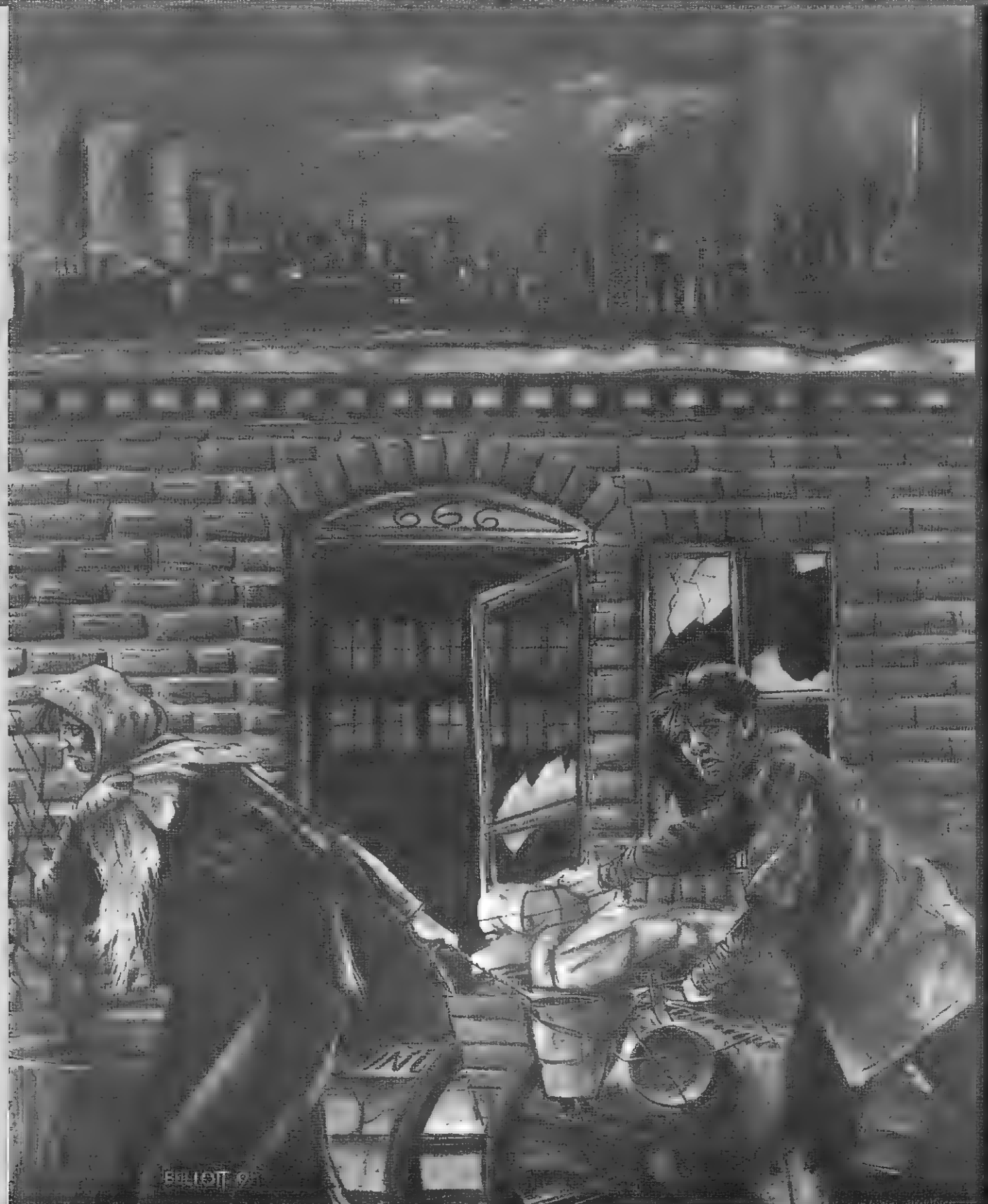
The robotic ships have brought an increase in satellite surveillance. But the enormous amount of traffic and the peculiar behaviour of the sea, with freak hot currents, and much radiation generated noise, makes small ship tracking and anomaly detection harder than in the "more sedate" Atlantic Ocean. Despite the best efforts of the EC traffic control is imperfect and relies in ship's computers telling accurate data, something easily tampered with.

The main beneficiary of this state of affairs is Europa Sur, a loose alliance of smugglers and other "free traders", formed as a reaction to the growing pressure of Interpol.

In Europa Sur are represented the Galician tobacco smugglers, the Gibraltarian drug smugglers, the Corsican Brotherhood, the smuggling elements of the Mafia and many independent Greek operators. They work mainly from the few "free" ports in the Med: Gibraltar, Malta, Palermo, Rodas and many small NAF ports.

Europa Sur also has friendly ties with many unlikely partners, from the Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria to the nomad families of the Orkneys, from the Greek partisans to the Nuova Mafia gunmen. Most of this people rely on the smugglers to cover a need or to supply needed products, from weapons to drugs to people. And they do not only take things in, they also take people out. This service is available in most important mediterranean ports, but you must be ready to spend several days alone in a robot-anker and willing to begin your new life from the middle of the Sahara desert, where a helicopter will have left you.

NEW CENTRAL EUROPE



POLAND

POPULATION: 38 MILLION
 LITERACY RATE: 98%
 MILITARY: 280,000
 LANGUAGES: POLISH, GERMAN, RUSSIAN
 ETHNIC GROUPS: POLISH, SLAVIC

—Milo Jeszenszky, central Euro-correspondant

OVERVIEW

Poland has always been a corridor for its powerful neighbors—Russia, Germany and Sweden. Even though Poland was partitioned several times, the Polish people have always kept their culture alive. This is what makes this country interesting to cyberpunks from all over Europe. Polish ingenuity is a talent Westerners are in awe of.

This is especially true in these troubled times. The Stock Market Crash of '94 killed the foreign investment that moved in after the fall of Communism. Some investors returned two years later, but by then, the economy had gone the way of the Dollar. The nation was wrecked; people fled to the open countryside, working farms in exchange for food.

But by 1999, Poland had somehow regained its feet. The economy wasn't much; most large facilities were owned by foreigners, but the majority fared better than fifteen years before. Maybe it was unshakable belief in God, maybe it was "only" shrewd business sense...

GOVERNMENT

In the last century, Poland has lived longer under foreign or military rule, than under a civilian government. Thus, it came as no surprise when President Walesa declared martial law in 1994. Not that things changed much. Poles were used to using connections and barter to get what they wanted. Whatever the Government outlawed, or was in short supply, could always be found on the black market.

There was never a real crackdown on the black market. The reason being, government officials were a prime supplier of the shadow economy! They weren't subject to customs, were allowed to hoard foreign currencies, and with the proper government backing, could get away with almost anything. The situation is as true today as it was for Poland under communism.

There have been changes, though. With the inception of the Harbingers, (Walesa's anti-corruption unit) most government officials think twice before dealing with organized crime. That doesn't always stop them from doing business on the side, though.

President Arek Sculc was born in 1970. Like most Poles, he's lived through three different types of government. As a result, he prefers a more machiavellian policy approach. "If a

thousand people gain by what you do, it's ok to lose one innocent bystander." This is reputed to be a favorite saying—though noone would confirm this. Sculc really sees himself as the first servant of the state; occupied with his people's welfare—not his own bank accounts. This is a notable exception among the regional "Presidents", and the Poles know this. Though they don't like him, Poles have been disproportionately quiet under his rule.

ECONOMY

Officially poor, Poland lives more by its shadow economy than by sanctioned work. After the Crash of '94, Poland's state-owned businesses and industries went down the tubes. After the fall of the communists, Polish officials published accounting numbers for state-controlled facilities for the first—they were abysmal. Too many people worked at machines that dated back to WWII. This was compounded by a bureaucracy numbering one fifth of all workers!

Thus 20% of all Poles were without work within a year. Many died of hunger or cold, because there were no social services. But many more found survival in one of Poland's shadow businesses. There they mixed amphetamines for the European market, operated black clinics and traded items from further east. Today, these businesses have extended to illegal software, illegal cyberware, mainframe rental, and many other things.

The Harbingers

Of course, the shadow economy became prime ground for organized crime of all kinds. But Sculc's rigorous use of the Harbingers shifted the balance towards the uncorrupted government. The stiff penalties (i.e., life-long braindance, on up to execution) deterred many officials from becoming entangled.

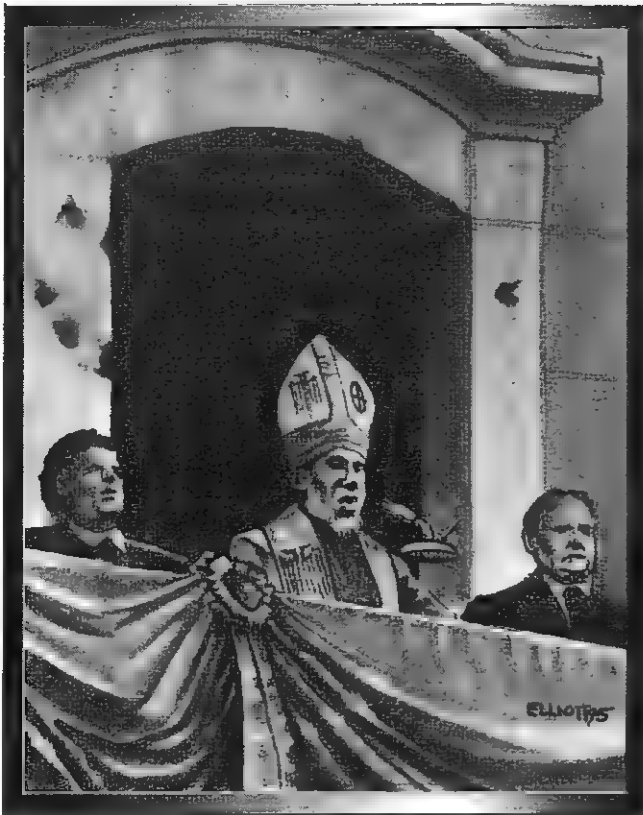
The Harbingers are quite secretive; their number is unknown; their orders come directly from the presidential office, and they are ready and willing to do anything against crime. Many suspected criminals vanish, only to return bearing signs of severe torture as a reminder of what happens when you overstep your limits.

All this should make Poland a very controlled place. Reality proves to be different. On one side, the Harbingers are too few to be everywhere. On the other side, Poland's shadow economy brings millions into Polish purses every year. Since there aren't enough legal jobs around, President Sculc cannot afford to imprison 25% of the total population. As long as criminals don't get too unruly, the status quo satisfies most Poles.

The Organitskaya

The Russian Mafia established itself throughout Europe with the flow of Russian immigrants. Even before the Nights of Fire, several large syndicates operated in Poland, becoming a definitive factor in the government.

But the greatest deal the Mob ever struck were the food exports during the Crash. With control of one-fifth of all farms



and processing enterprises, the mafia had a market share that promised enormous profits if sold to the highest bidder. Accounts in Swiss and Scandinavian banks can tell tales of fabulous rises only to be liquidated when key Organitskaya personnel took flight at the advent of the Harbingers.

Various syndicates only cover 40% of all crime activities. They are riddled with undercover agents from both the Harbingers and Interpol, ready to break up organizations at any time.

The Church

Cardinal Konrad Lewandowski had always been a power-conscious man. He rationalized this with a famous quote publicized in 2016: "I know what's best for my herd and since they obviously don't, it is my obligation to lead them."

Long before the 2014 Reforms, there was talk in the Church that certain things would have to be changed if the Catholic Church wanted to stay one of the leading religious institutions. Many people had abandoned a church that wasn't up-to-date with the world-wide societal changes. After the death of John-Paul II, the way seemed open to a revitalization of Catholic Christianity.

Cardinal Lewandowski viewed these talks with suspicion, and quietly he sought out trustworthy followers and allies. Along with Polish Church hardliners, he gained the support of President Sculc. The exact deal is unknown, but rumors say that the Cardinal promised to suppress public strikes.

Thus, two weeks after the pope had declared his reforms, Cardinal Lewandowski made his move. In a famous speech, transmitted by state radio, he declared the Pope insane; his reforms, machinations of evil, and any follower of the Pope, doomed to serve in Hell. He further demanded that Catholics loyal to the church and spirit of Poland should raise a Polish flag the following morning. This was to commemorate the founding of the new Church of Poland.

The Poles, being very religious (at least 50% of the population practices regularly), were thunderstruck. Thousands argued and debated in the streets. The next morning, 67% of Polish Catholics declared their loyalty to Cardinal Lewandowski.

Today, the Church of Poland is a dominant power in Poland. The Cardinal never hesitates to voice political opinions. For some reason, the hardline Church policies seem to strike the right chord in the troubled masses. The Church of Poland represents eternal order in an everchanging world, something techno-shocked citizens were missing.

The original Catholic Church lost much of its power. Due to state interference, they get only a fraction of their revenues, and are hindered by bureaucracy. Of course, the Vatican isn't happy about its lost brother. Aside from starting a huge agit-prop campaign, they also sent "situation control teams" to speak to the Cardinal. Their success was limited. Lately, the Pope began talks with the European Ministry for Foreign Politics in order to pressure President Sculc. Results remain to be seen...

REGIONAL GUIDE

Warsaw

Polish cities are centres of underground culture. Suppressed by church and state, Polish cyberpunks found a niche in the expanding slums of the big cities. Cyberpunks from all European nations regularly visit Warsaw and Lodz to sample the chaotic counter-culture. The tech isn't up to date and the government regularly make sweeps, but some eurobucks in the right palms can get you anything here. And I mean anything. From anti-tank weaponry to live snuff shows, Warsaw is the place to come.

⇒ U R NOT REDDI

Cyberpunk, slack\Rs & burnoutz: come 1, come all! C what U've bin missin' ... Dive in\2 a full-bore neuropar\T in the depths of NCE; no lawz, no limitz. Go B\yond the edge: psycho\neuro\bio\aggro\robo\sado\techno mega-rave Warsaw styl; on Gornoslaska, near Trasa Lazienkowska ... ask Zap Zydowski 4 more info, ba\B!!!

-Flyer circulated in Warszawa clubs



THE CZECH REPUBLIC

POPULATION:11 MILLION
 LITERACY RATE:99%
 MILITARY:60,000
 LANGUAGES:CZECH, SLOVAK, GERMAN
 ETHNIC GROUPS: ...CZECH, SLOVAK, POLISH,
 GERMAN, GYPSY

The Czech Republic traditionally has good ties to its western neighbors. Originally part of the Habsburg Empire, it played an important role (to be exact, the starting point) in the Thirty Years War of the mid-seventeenth century. In the Habsburg Empire, the areas now comprising the Czech Republic (Moravia and Bohemia) had their own king. Even then, the Czech people showed a trait that still prevails in modern times: the will to independence.

During the Communist regime, Prague remained a centre of independent thought. In the Prague Spring of 1968, thousands demonstrated for reforms. But the time wasn't ripe, and the uprising was quelled in short order. Ironically, the tanks and guns needed to do this (adaptations of Soviet equipment) were made in Czechoslovakia itself.

Independence didn't save the Czechs from being bought up by their western neighbors. The fall of the communists brought a wave of German and Austrian investors. Once again counting on their connections to Prague, they flooded the country, building facilities en-masse. The Crash of '94 put a damper on that.

Aside from the general difficulties endured, it gave the Czechs time to establish their own economy. Funny as it may sound, the Crash saved them from total assimilation.

The high-tech equipment already installed gave the Czech Republic a running start into the next century. Of all Central European states, the CR is the one with the most chances to enter the big league. Of course, some people feared the rise of a middle-European "Little Tiger." This would endanger the EC's hegemony and maybe even unite the Central European states against their common...trade partner. Therefore, the EC is working hard to keep the CR under control, while Czechs themselves feverishly consolidate as much economic power as possible.

General Skroup

Easies in Brussels swallowed hard when word of new economic powers drifted in from the Far East. PacRim nations long under the economic dominion of Japan, the U.S. and the USSR, suddenly demanded a market share in the world of the future.

When the Iron Curtain fell, nations that had been under communist rule for forty years threatened to do just the same.

To counter this, the EC immediately moved to make the new markets eurotrade-dependent. In most cases, the Easies were successful. Soon, EC imports, especially from Germany, amounted to more than 40% of the whole.

Then came the Crash of '94. Western Europe, reeling from economic turbulence, lost control for a short time. The Czech Republic, favorite child of German investors, took its resources and looked east for profit. Czech politicians had long seen economic dependence on the EC as a thorn in their side, and sought allies to counter EC-influence. Though most NCE-countries were still on the edge of poverty, the Czechs found friends, and a Central European Trade Partnership was planned. These plans haven't advanced yet, thanks to EC pressures. But the possibility is there.

The Easies were alarmed by their child gone bad. The problem was the Czech parliament. Too many powers to deal with, and rising anti-EC sentiment in the populace made manipulation difficult. The solution was simple: install an EC-friendly dictator by whatever means possible. Since this was Europe, after all, classic insurgency could not be used. Thus, they sought friends in high places.

General Skroup—long known as power-hungry and determined to unify Europe against "Far-Eastern threats"—proved to be the ideal Easie dupe. People from Brussels initiated secret talks, promising him that a united Europe could only become reality through the EC. Meanwhile, they infiltrated large organizations, instigating unrest and disorder. The chaotic political atmosphere made it possible for Skroup to take advantage of the parliament and invade Poland in late 2018. This act shook the Republic, bringing Czech trust in their government to an all-time low, while eliminating Poland as a potential ally.

Currently, public sentiment is calling for a strong man to take charge—which is exactly what the Easies were hoping for.

GOVERNMENT

The parliament is a hotbed of lobbyists: minorities, businessmen, nationalists, pan-europeans, unions, etc. are constantly at each other's throats to bargain and talk the government into complying with their wishes. But if threatened by an outsider, they stand united. The current problem is finding out if the EC is just such a threat. This is the line that divides parties and lobbyists alike. On one side, the pro-ECers argue that the Republic can profit from continued affiliation with the EC. They believe that the CR is bound to become a member, on the same footing as the others.

On the other side, loyal patriots fear increasing dependence on Western trade partners. The pro-NCE league plans a trade union with its eastern neighbors to counter the growing EC power. Of course, this union would be under control of the Republic, since it is the richest state in NCE right now. Leader of the pro-NCE group is Anna Lera, populist and Minister of Culture; she published several books highlighting the concentration of EC power in German/French hands. Now 40 years of age, no one knows if she will live to be 41, having survived two "terrorist" attacks already.





But what really bothers the Easies, aside from Czech nationalists and 3000 activists, is the increasing influence of Far Eastern corps on Czech politics. Seeing an opportunity to move into the Euro-market again, corporations like Arasaka and Mitsubishi-Dai invest heavily in the Czech economy. And since their goals met at the point of checking EC power, they began secretly donating funds to the pro-NCE league. Already, cheap Arasaka weapons supplement Prague's police arsenal. The situation causes headaches among knowledgeable Easies.

ECONOMY

The riches thrust on the Czech Republic's shoulders came from two sources: EC investments and comparatively cheap labor. The Prague government, though split into factions, is good at creating an ideal environment for young enterprises. Most groups, advocate low labor costs, government incentives for beginners, and a variety of other measures. The country is geared for success in a big way.

But this is only one side of the economy. The Czech countryside depends heavily on German tourists. Hordes invade the country every year to examine the old castles and beautiful

scenery. Since most other major touristic areas have become somewhat "terrorist-friendly" from a vacationer's standpoint, Germans now go to their own backyard for vacation. Thus, the Republic's hinterlands became dotted with tourist resorts. With the advent of the 3000 group, they have increased security, resulting in clashes between corp police and the local populace. This hasn't endeared the Germans to the Czechs, but since tourism is a major money-maker, local governments keep a lid on it.

REGIONAL GUIDE

Prague

Prague is one of the most beautiful capitals in the world. Since it wasn't hit by bomber raids in WW II, Prague's buildings survived almost unscathed. The various mansions and edifices speak of a colourful history dating back a thousand years, their styles as diverse as the population of Prague itself.

The city is home to everything from Slovaks, Bosniaks, and Germans, to Gypsies and many others. This diversity stems from the fact that Prague has always been a stopping point for one of the oldest and most important land routes in



Europe—the corridor from the North European plain to the Danube. This has always brought trade—and a Europe-wide influx of people—to Prague. Of these people, three groups that have a particular influence in today's city life: the Germans, the Jews and the students.

Prague was always home to a large Jewish ghetto. Barely 5000 of the original 30,000 survived the Nazis, but the Jews persisted anyway. Of course, the ghetto has long since been eliminated, while many modern Jewish centers dot the city. The most recent event for the Jewish community was the Mid-East Meltdown. It brought many Jews seeking shelter in Prague. As a result, the number of Jews rose to more than 35,000. Which you might think makes the community a ripe target for muslim hardliners, but a number of the immigrants are ex-soldiers still protecting their people. Defence training has begun among the younger Jews in case the persecutions start again.

Germany also has a long history in Prague. Wenzel I, a 13th century king, drew many Germans to his city and his court. Charles V. continued this tradition; he chose Prague as the site of the first university in German-speaking lands. The German community continued growing until the mid-19th century, when about 50% percent of Prague spoke German as their first language.

Recently, German-speakers have increased as German firms that imported managerial staff. Thus, the German influence is steadily increasing, making the Czech population somewhat wary. But still, they bring cash and that's what really counts, neh?

Prague's Germans face an immediate threat from the 3000 group. Since the advent of these terrorists, there have been a total of 69 hits on German installations and citizens. Today, paranoia is the name of the game for German civilians in Prague.

The University of Prague, a centre of German learning and culture, is also home to wide variety of opinions. From church reformers in the 17th century to the Prague Spring of '68, it has always been a centre of revolutionary ideas. Today the university is a battlefield of clashing cultural drifts, most notably, nationalism vs. humanistic communism. The vocal battles within the Carolinum are only the most visible sign of what's going on in



Prague's academic population. The students, as always, carry new ideas and spread them to the best of their ability, via anti-German demonstrations, reemerging communist theories, or whatever. Many groups are moving to gain influence in campus politics. Officially, the university is non-politic, but in reality, the various professors use their positions to influence students. Thus Germans, Czech nationalists, socialists and others try to install their favorite professors.

Aside from political battles, Prague thrives as always. Business people from all over Europe walk its streets and sign deals in its rustic restaurants.

SLOVAKIA

POPULATION:5.5 MILLION

LITERACY RATE:100%

MILITARY: ...40,000 (MOSTLY CORP SECURITY)

LANGUAGES: ...SLOVAK, CZECH, GERMAN

ETHNIC GROUPS: ...SLOVAK, HUNGARIAN, CZECH, GERMAN, POLISH; A SMATTERING OF KOREAN AND JAPANESE

OVERVIEW

Slovakia suffered heavily from the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Back then, Slovakia's role was to supply the workers for heavy industry. The intellectual elite, the administrators and most higher-educated people always came from the Czech side. This meant that after the split, Slovakia had to rebuild its administration from scratch, a very difficult proposition. The post-Iron Curtain privatization was hampered by politics, while investors saw the deals available from its western neighbor. The aging plants and hordes of unlearned, unemployed workers didn't help, either. Economic breakdown was inevitable.

In 1998, when Slovakia teetered on bankruptcy, a white knight appeared. Mitsubishi Motors, a subsidiary of the giant Mitsubishi group, bought up several plants and began producing cars for the East-european market. Mitsubishi saw two advantages in Slovakia: the cheap workforce and the low EC influence. Slovakia had been overlooked by the Easies because the economy was abysmal and its political importance, nil. Therefore, Mitsubishi could operate without EC trade interventions.

The intervention of Mitsubishi was heralded as an economic rebirth. Forgotten by the EC, and on the downside to catastrophe, the Slovaks embraced the Far East. Japanese culture became a big fad; Japanese tourists were treated like guests of state, and delegations from Mitsubishi regularly met the president.

As word spread, other investors followed Mitsubishi's example. Their tactics seemed especially successful after Japan was kicked out of the EC Market. Zaibatsus produced their wares in Europe, circumventing maximum import limits and other trade restrictions. Today, Slovakia is a secure bridgehead for Japanese and Korean corporations. To be exact, they own the place.

GOVERNMENT

Something's rotten in Slovakia. There are three things worrying President Cernak at the moment: the power of the Zaibatsus, the growing pressure of the EC, and the unemployed Youth.

The first problem is nigh impossible to solve. Zaibatsus influence/own many of the local governments and their lobbyists affect state decisions. On the other hand, people are happy with them; they bring in money, work and technology. Should they withdraw from Slovakia, the country would instantly return to the Middle Ages. Thus, the Zaibatsus are free to do as they please.

This of course, worries the Easies. It was hard enough to kick Japan out of the club—now they are building a New Japan in Europe's backyard. But they can't do much about it. When they became aware of the growing Far Eastern subversion, it was already too late; Slovakia doesn't depend on the EC for trade anymore. Well okay, maybe Slovakia does some 30% of its trade with members of the EC, but since the Megacorps do 90% of those deals, it's their problem.

So the Easies began to flood Slovakia with propaganda. Radio and TV stations from Austria, the CR and Poland, broadcast a 24hr-a-day hype, concentrating on showing how free and easy people live inside the EC—while others slave under Zaibatsu occupation. The notion is not to degrade the Slovaks, but to make people conscious of who really runs the show at home. The second line of programming features important characters from history fighting for their home and culture. As an example, they look to the colonization of South America, showing that all indigenous people eventually lost their culture to the invaders. Though they just wanted to make the Slovaks fear for their "cultural soul," the Easies unknowingly gave the pro-NCE parties an important tool. This fumble, though quite successful in raising a nationalistic

undercurrent in Slovakia, also produced similar results in several EC-dominated countries! The shows were discontinued...

The Zaibatsus didn't need long to work out a counter-program. Using a variation of the "Cultural Invader" theme, they began showing the EC as a monstrous Dragon intent on swallowing whole states. The Zaibatsus, on the other hand, are depicted as nonokata-wielding St.Gregors, fighting for Honor and Helping those in Need. Neat, eh?

In the last five years, the situation has escalated into a full-blown propaganda war; each side scoring hits, but neither making real advances. The only party profiting from the media war are the pro-NCE Leagues of countries adjacent to Slovakia. With each new program, they gain new followers.

The third factor in local politics is the unemployed youth. They are the losers, the ones who failed the corporate job tests—and those who didn't care to be wageslaves 'til the end of their lives. They form nomad groups operating in the less-settled mountain areas. Feared by Zaibatsus for attacking their transports, and adored by the populace for their recklessness, many secretly support these outlaws.

The nomads' greatest weapon is the ability to improvise (something they've been prepared for since communist times). Their techs are highly sought after for the ability to keep age-old machinery working with only the barest equipment.

As a matter of course, the corps hunt them mercilessly. Undercover EC-supported media teams recently unearthed frightening facts about 'corporate justice.' They found mass graves filled with over a hundred nomads. Survivors living under cover in Poland, tell of midnight raids by AV-Gunships and ACPA soldiers. The story hit like a nuke. For the first time, people demonstrated against their employers. The corps in turn, suppressed the story as best they could, but it had already been transmitted to independent stations throughout eastern Europe. As more and more people heard of the massacre, support for the Slovakian nomads increased tenfold. In addition, hundreds of would-be anarchists flocked to them, bringing tech and guns. By the summer of 2020, the nomads became a local force to be reckoned with.

ECONOMY

It's true, Zaibatsus do most of the transactions. But look at my country first before judging us fools. Slovakia has the natural resources of a donut shop. We simply can't produce homemade stuff without paying for basics on the international market. And when was the last time you saw a local with e-bucks? Excepting mafia people, there are only a handful, and they invest in safer deals than our pseudo-economy. What we have is man-power. The Zaibatsus use that man-power and give us high-tech in return. The cyberdecks you see here were bought legally in some corporate shop. Our Net is one of the better in the East-Bloc, and even though we don't use top equipment, there aren't any Icemen in our area, thanks to Zaibatsu support.



NOTABLE CORPS IN SLOVAKIA

Aside from Mitsubishi there are eight major corporations working in Slovakia; here are the top five:

- **PETROCHEM:** owns much of the arable countryside, using it to produce ChooH2
- **ARASAKA:** does major bodyguard business. The Slovakian gov't has steadfastly refused to make Rent-An-Army or Rent-A-Police deals, officially for monetary reasons. Still, there are some Arasaka subsidiaries producing articles for the European market.
- **SUNGAN INDUSTRIES:** has several plants producing electronics. They are currently expanding their cyberware branches, which might increase the quality of NCE-cyberware.
- **NETWORK NEWS 54:** use this as the basis for most of their NCE programs. They keep out of the media war, though it produces some good news.
- **HYUNDAI:** produce commercial vehicles of all kinds in their Slovakian plants. The necessary parts come mainly from Korea, making them very wary of transport raids.

But we were talking business. The biggest Slovakian employers are still the state arms manufacturers. No, we didn't sell our military to Arasaka like Portugal. You see, it's good to know that your military is there in case of a real emergency. I heard that Slovakian negotiators still use Operation Big Stick as a favorite bargaining chip. And I guess, the military wouldn't miss an opportunity to beat up some Zais. I hear they are the true force behind the NCE-nationalists here—after all, they're paid to be patriotic.

Mafia isn't big business in Slovakia. Most things we need are supplied by the Zais, including safe drugs. Not that we forgot how to brew good beer, but many people seem to think Jap-style relaxing is better for their careers. Not that any of them are my friends. So, the Russian Mob earns their money in only a few of their normal operations: prostitution, gambling and smuggling.

In recent years, they is more and more trouble with the Yakuza. With any collection of Japs comes a number of Yaks for doing black business. The Yaks have brothels employing only Jap-girls. You can see the sarimen driving up to these houses out of town when the work is done. I hear they do good business, even with Slovaks. Me, I'd rather drink a couple of beers and hang around with my friends in the cellar taverns.

HUNGARY

POPULATION:11 MILLION
 LITERACY RATE:99%
 MILITARY:80,000
 LANGUAGES:MAGYAR, GERMAN,
 ROM, VARIOUS SLAVIC
 ETHNIC GROUPS:MAGYAR, GYPSY,
 GERMAN, SERB, BOSNIANS, CROATS,
 SLOVAK, RUMANIANS, AND OTHERS (UP TO
 15 DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS KNOWN!)

OVERVIEW

Hungary is feeling the effects of a near civil war. After the fall of the USSR, Hungary did what all Central European states did, it paved the way for private investment and democracy. Since they had promoted good relationships with Western democracies, even under communist rule, the country had a head start. At the Crash of '94, Hungary had already consolidated enough economic power to withstand the worst effects. The only area troubling the government was the farmers of the Puszta. They feared for their survival after foreign investors tried buying up large parts of the arable farmland. Farmers took to the streets and after heavy debates with the government, got restrictions against foreign farm purchases.

This ethnically-balanced country escaped the small-time European nationalism of the 90's. The basis was there. It was a wonder that fifteen different ethnicities could live together without immediate violence. Hungarian open-mindedness is based on the simple fact that over one fifth of Hungarians live in foreign countries. Any attack on minorities in Hungary would see retaliation in the home country.

This friendly policy was another factor in the positive development of Hungary's economy. The uprising was cut short by the Food Crash of 2002. The Puszta, Hungary's great flatland, became a dustbowl when the mysterious virus killed all wheat. Thousands of farmers lost their livelihood and moved to the cities, creating enormous supply problems. The EC, in a humanitarian effort, flew enormous amounts of food to Budapest and other cities. Public sentiment rose in favor of the EC. Plans were made to help the Hungarians plant alternative crops, but many of the younger people had lost faith in a farming future. Instead, they intended to stay in the cities and live the easy life, on the gov't dole. The government had bought up large tracts of land, originally planning to redistribute the land cheaply to the unemployed. But then a giant investor rose from the east: SovOil offered megabucks in cash and resources in return for the better part of the Puszta. The megacorp wanted to grow their new CHOOH2 grains on the fertile, easily-harvested plains. In a moment of weakness, the government accepted. From their point of view, restrictions placed on the ownership of arable land were a thing of the past. They made a deal with SovOil to leave the remaining farmers alone and canceled the old laws. Most the farmers hadn't wanted their land, anyhow.

but they didn't take the general populace into account. Once the sale was made public, an outcry shook the nation. Thousands demonstrated against the "raping of their homeland." Rioters battled police and SovOil security in an effort to drive the invaders out. Confronted, the government lost their cool, calling on the army to stop the uprisings with maximum force. Of course, this only added fuel to the fire. When infantry units stepped in to protect the hated SovOil installations, the civilian populace feared a new dictatorship. Out of fear rose hate, and soon, arms moved through Serbia and Croatia to Hungarian civilians. Civil war was inevitable.

But the much feared open clash didn't come. Instead, civil disturbance grew into a low-intensity conflict. Partisans ambushed military convoys, bombed SovOil installations and generally caused mayhem. Military crackdowns were periodically successful, but no definite end was in sight.

That is, until General Todorov, COC Hungarian army, took control of the situation. In June 2012, he informed the frustrated Hungarian government that they need not return to parliament. The populace didn't react much. For them, the army finalized what had been true for years. General Todorov began talks with EDF personnel and got the backing of the EC. On July 23, 2012, he socialized the SovOil investments in Hungary. In return, he promised to reimburse SovOil for damages over a period of 10 years. SovOil forces attempted to retain final control of their assets, like they did in the USSR, but faced the combined forces of both Partisans and Army equipped with the latest hi-tech armament. They withdrew, and the Puszta was again in Hungarian hands.

General Todorov was celebrated as a national hero. Nobody seemed to want to mess with this living icon, so he continued in power. In an effort to democratize his rule, he invented a kind of parliamentary dictatorship. Even though day to day business was largely done by the parliament, he stayed supreme ruler and military commander of Hungary; a situation remaining to this day.

GOVERNMENT

As commander of the Hungarian military and political dictator of the country, General Todorov is bound by none. No court can judge him; his word is law. Everyone but the Hungarians believe he's going to delay the promised elections until after his death. We've seen it happen in Great Britain and lots of other places.

Funny thing is, I don't think they even want another parliamentary confusion. Last time I was in Budapest, people still had pictures of him in their living rooms. Even after having a couple of drinks with the locals, they still insisted they were doing this out of free will. Brought shivers up my spine, I tell you. I mean, this man has absolute power. He can do what he wants, anytime he wants, without anyone daring to stop him. And the people trust him! Maybe that's why there is so little trouble in Hungary. Streets are clean; people behave themselves, and there are virtually no demonstrations. The demos that do happen are instigated by leftist streetpunks—who aren't taken seriously, anyhow.

I believe the Hungarians are content with the way things are. The General takes care of their troubles within and without, and as far as they know, he does it right. They still see him as the saviour of Hungary; a man of utmost integrity.

The situation also has its good side. The General cut down on Organitskaya biz that's been in-country since the nineties. He takes care the economy stays intact; all in all, very stable conditions. The way things are, he doesn't need "Special Police." After all, why make people do what you want—if they do it for free?

Some people are less happy with The Man. Those living near Lake Balaton, for example. For the last 70 years, it's been pumped with industrial waste, and now people wonder why the fish swim belly-up. The locals hoped General Todorov would do something about it—soon. Problem is, the Gen needs the lake as a sink for developing industry in the area. Now, guess what's higher on his list of priorities, a vacation site or industrial hardware?

Until now, they've kept their cool and simply sent representatives to see the Boss. But my estimation is, things will get a lot more lively as soon as the Gen terminates next year's elections. There's still plenty of weapons to go around, in case they want to stage another insurrection...

REGIONAL GUIDE

Budapest

If it weren't for the acid rain, Budapest would be quite a beautiful city. As it is, the once-lush temples of empirical style are blackened and crumbling. The faded glory of the Austrian imperial time of old gets me depressed every time I go there.

Ok, you wanna know what's so hot about this place? First of all, there's the plastic surgery biz. Lots of people go here every year to change their faces. Budapest's clinics are pretty good, and they have one big advantage: they're bloody cheap. For those without the change to have a check-up in Oslo, Budapest is the place. Middle-class wives from Germany, wealthy socialites from Hungary, and Mafioso from Poland all meet in the Split City. And while they're at it, they also visit the Turkish baths dotting it.

Talking of the Turkish baths, there is nothing as relaxing as three hours of massages, baths and the like. And you can do biz there, too. The baths are renowned throughout the East-Bloc as a place to strike deals in a comfortable atmosphere. Believe me, I've seen Arasaka execs, Easies and Russian Gangsters bathe peacefully beside each other. They're a neutral ground for the powers-that-be, which is one reason it's so relaxing. For a bargain of only 200eb per hour, you can rent your own private room to talk about really touchy things. I love the baths.

To ensure things stay that way, most baths have their own security. These people are tough, my word on it. Doing sec work in the baths is the equivalent of heaven for most east bloc mercs. They get good wages, have free access to facilities and don't risk their lives in some civil war. The only real problem security faces are the hundreds of pick-pockets infesting the city.



They hunt the alleys of Pest in search of Westerners with loose euro. So take care of your loose hardware.

Another major selling point of Budapest is its booming sex industry. Brothels and flesh-dens are nestled into almost every nook and cranny of the city, from the poorest back-alleys to the areas surrounding the bath-houses of the elite. The quality of these brothels varies a great deal—some are strictly meat-puppet pest-holes, while others are top-notch ritz. The quality of the joint is directly related to the affluence of the neighborhood. Almost anything goes in these pleasure-dromes, and the numerous tourists, jet-set cyberpunks and visiting businessmen tend to frequent these "houses of ill repute" as often as the famous bath-houses. Even the booming porn industries of Central and Southern

Europe, not to mention America's own, make regular visits to Budapest to seek out new talent, new kinks and new perversions.

You're pretty much clear once you set foot into Buda, the hilly half of the city. The reason is simple. Clustered around the Citadel are hundreds of noble mansions. Most of their owners invested heavily into security. Heard a couple of Golden Kids keep holiday resorts here in case they want some east bloc adventure.

'Pest is where the action is. Though large-scale crime, demonstrations and the like are quickly put down by the Gen's militia, undercover biz here is ripe as anywhere. Aside from official clinics, there's a number of ripperdocs patching you up cheaply with cybertech by Husqvarna and Rostovic. All these eastern heavy-metal freaks had to come from somewhere, don't they?

ROMANIA

POPULATION: 24 MILLION

LITERACY RATE: 82%

MILITARY: 120,500

LANGUAGES: ROMANIAN, MAGYAR,

GERMAN, RUSSIAN, VARIOUS SLAVIC

ETHNIC GROUPS: ... ROMANIAN, HUNGARIAN,

GERMAN, UKRAINIAN, SERB, CROAT,

RUSSIAN, TURK, AND GYPSY

OVERVIEW

The poorest country in NCE. Ruled by a totalitarian regime, exploited by the EEC and beleaguered by terrorists, it combines the worst stereotypes of eastern Europe into one bad mess.

It began while Romania's was under communist rule. Nicolae Ceaucescu, Romania's dictator between 1965 and the fall of the Iron Curtain, did everything to ensure his rule. He placed relatives in important posts, suppressed minority cultures and deported the handicapped to special state asylums. His iron fist was the Securitate, decidedly the worst of the East European security agencies. Ceaucescu was reputedly shot in the back while "trying to flee from the party headquarters." We all know what this means...

After Ceaucescu's death the country could hope for a better future. But there were grave problems. Even behind the Iron Curtain, Romania was one of the least developed and poorest countries—it could barely feed its citizens! Romania was hit by the Stock Crash and the Mideast Meltdown without having any time in between. Luckily they didn't have enough of an economy that could crash at the time.

The Meltdown raised another set of problems. Suddenly, the country found itself facing a wave of Turks (and others) fleeing before the fallout. Thousands of refugees invaded the coun-

try by boat, foot or vehicle. Of course, the EC had to put a stop to the refugees transiting Romania. Selflessly they shipped gun-boats, outdated fighter planes and crates of surplus guns to the country—and the Black Sea turned red with blood...

With the economy as poor as ever, but a military more powerful than before, the classic situation arose. General Popescu found that his word was stronger than parliament's and decided that the country needed a leader to escape this mess. The coup was short and bloody; people were afraid of another dictator like Ceaucescu and took to the streets, but



when the demonstrations were quelled with lethal ammunition, they resigned themselves to the situation. General Popescu immediately started talks with the EC, bargaining his country's resources for continued funding.

Today, Romania is a blighted land. The Danube delta is black with the waste of five countries, and the south is drenched in acid rain. Naturally, the Romanians are not particularly happy. Terrorist attacks are a common occurrence, so much so, that Popescu instated martial law. Still, the 3000 group enjoys a lot of support from the populace. Sentiment is rising towards the critical state, where revolution is inevitable.

ECONOMY

Romania's economy is the worst in Europe. Food is rationed and new shoes cost an entire monthly income. The situation worsens in winter. The power stations are old and tend towards brownouts, and there isn't enough heating gas, so people frequently freeze to death in their homes. In addition, two thousand villages in the countryside still don't have phone access.

Of course, if you're with the Man, you can get anything. Military malls stock anything EC funds can buy. Though most articles are so out of fashion they can pass as retro, they're a step up from nothing.

Speaking of funds, the EC exports more than money and guns to Romania. To be exact, the main trading item is garbage; Romania is the EC's unofficial dump. The EC has lost the ability to fully recycle or dump its rubbish within its boundaries. Thus thousands of tons of trash grace Romania's countryside. This is the price General Popescu paid for his eurobucks. Aside from the fact that a lot of people live on trash-picking, they're a thorn in the eye of every Romanian. Needless to say, ash-men from the EC travel in armed convoys.

In this climate of economic depression and state repression, the black market thrives. Since the economy is so bad, even the Russians won't set up an operation, it's common people who do the smuggling for daily survival. Busloads of black marketeers hop the border to Hungary and Serbia. The customs police turn a blind eye; after all, it is their friends and neighbors who are trying to make a living.

Another way to get equipment is to work at a Daewoo subsidiary in Romania. In the mid '90s Daewoo, a Korean car manufacturer, bought the state automobile industry. Since then, Daewoo produces cars for Europe in Romania. Pay is miserable by European standards, but since we're in Romania, it's considered big time if you're doing 10-hour assembly shifts. And if you're doing well, they might give you a 50 euro cash bonus. Don't sneer, this is living costs for a month; two if you live lean.

GOVERNMENT

General Alexander Popescu started off with noble goals. Popescu was leader of the army at a time when parliament con-

sisted of bickering fools, and Romania was beleaguered by catastrophe. The only hope for a resurrection of Romania lay in the open hands of the EC. In an attempt to strengthen the state in the wake of the Meltdown's refugees, they had already shipped weapons and humanitarian help. Much of the help vanished into politicians' pockets, while the population grew poorer.

At that time, Popescu had regular contact with military advisors from the EC, whom he saw as guides to a better world. They had unlimited funds, a stable political situation and technology of the newest kind. On the other side was Romania, wracked by internal strife, natural disasters and home to thousands of unsupportable refugees. In spring 1998, he began secret talks with agents of the EC. Three years later, the coup took place. General Popescu tried to minimize the damage, but he had to go through with his plans if he wanted to save his motherland. Eurobucks flowed into the treasury, granting Popescu a time of respite. Key state industries were modernized, while foreign investors entered joint ventures.

As a result, resistance died down as people feared endangering their newfound prosperity. The next two years were marked by an anti-corruption program and re-development of the infrastructure, both quite successful. People in Bukarest suffered less from interruptions in the supply of water and energy. To create jobs, Popescu planned to modernize the roads country-wide.

Then the EC presented him the bill. It was a simple choice—either play by their rules or they would stop all funds. By 2004, the Easies had a free hand to do whatever they wanted in Romania. Investors that were hailed as saviors, soon turned into leeches. They used the cheap workforce while giving only the barest in return. Romania was kept addicted to the eurobuck drug.

Sixteen years later, the situation hasn't changed much. General Popescu is now a cynical old man, devoid of scruples and morals. He rules his country with an iron fist called the AMS: Military Security Agency.

General Popescu's enemies are legion. Terrorist cells meet irregularly in Bulgaria or Serbia to organize new attacks on government or EC installations. Highway banditry in the Carpathians against trash haulers is common; letter bombs are a way of life. In short, the underground is very active. What's more, there are unsubstantiated rumors of Neo-Soviet criminal and intelligence participation, but the terrorist's greatest weapon is public sentiment. The Romanians feel that change is coming, and are willing to risk much to make it come true.

In turn, the Black Troops of the AMS crush any resistance they find with ultimate force. The Black Troops are the horror of any Romanian, but still the populace continues its support for the terrorists. The situation has degraded so far, the Easies are thinking about pulling out; which would spell doom of General Popescu.



BULGARIA

POPULATION: 9 MILLION

LANGUAGES:TURK, BULGARIAN

ETHNIC GROUPS: . . BULGARIAN, TURK, GYPSY,
MACEDONIAN, ARMENIAN, RUSSIAN, ETC.

OVERVIEW

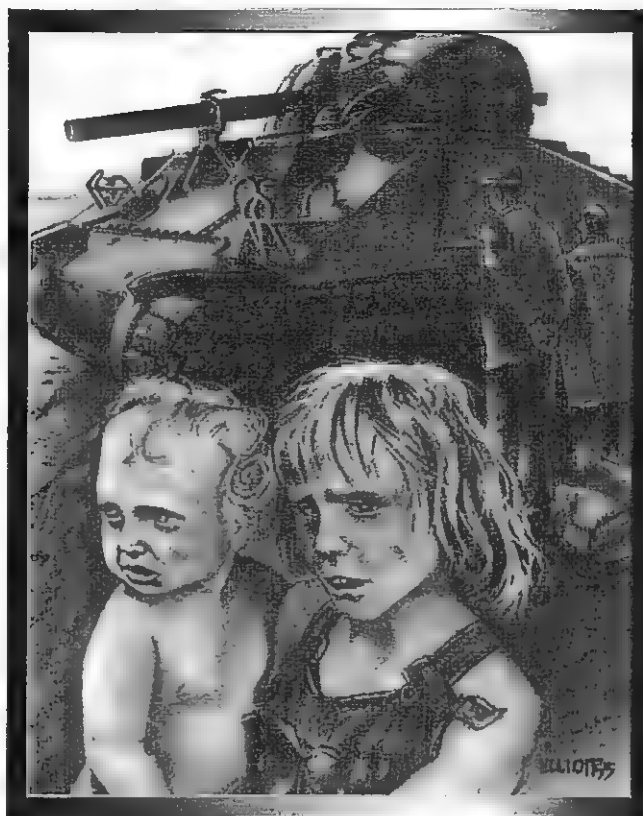
Bulgaria lives on the perpetual edge, torn between old allies to the east, and new money in the west. Both powers vie to bring Bulgaria fully under their sphere of influence. The USSR has seen its power fade in the face of the EC's economic imperialism. Their last bridgehead in Europe remains Bulgaria, and they intend to hold it. Bulgaria's important geographic location at the junction between Europe and the Near East has made it the key to Turkey and the lands beyond.

This is why the EC urgently tries to make Bulgaria another subject state. Every year, they pump millions in military and economic "help" into Bulgaria's coffers. They are countered by the USSR's influence on the country's dictator, Khristo Zarev, and its position as main trading partner.

But the EC and the Neo-SSR are not the only factors First Citizen Zarev has to take into account. To the north lies Romania, controlled by the EC, a reminder of the Community's power. Their aggressive behaviour (the sinking of several Bulgarian gunboats and small craft in the Black Sea) documents the EC's willingness to use force to get their way. Though the vessels officially were in Romania's waters, how they got there is anybody's guess...

Turkey presents Zarev with an entirely different problem. After the nukes hit in 1997, thousands fled the coming fallout to the safer countries of the north. But the Land of Milk and EuroDollars refused to help. Instead, the EC paid Bulgaria in arms and cash to stop this invasion. Like Romania, Bulgaria closed its borders, shooting anyone who crossed the lines. For the Bulgarians, this wasn't a guard-for-hire job—they feared for their lives. Being a very poor country, Bulgaria couldn't afford a extra hundred thousand needy people. So they sank ships bearing refugees and mined their borders. The Turks living in Bulgaria instantly revolted. The resulting riots were quelled with even more violence, officially "to protect the inner security of the state," but everyone knew this was only a safety valve for rising Bulgarian nationalism. For the Turks, regardless of passport, movement was restricted and a curfew was installed. Though most restrictions have been lifted in the twenty years since, the situation remains explosive. Rumors of Turkish insurgents controlled by Ankara can not be substantiated.

But to see the genius of Zarev's keeping the country together, one has to take its problems into account. State industries have operated heedless of the ecology for 80+ years now. In consequence, the woods were destroyed by pollution, the



rivers have been killed by sewage, and the acid rain coming from Bulgaria is feared throughout Europe.

Funny thing is, Bulgaria continues to produce surplus food. The solution is the biochemical industry, which is the only Bulgarian industry using technology newer than 1930. Bulgarian biochemists have made it possible to produce kibble from the meagerest resources. This may not sound terrific, but wait until you've seen Bulgarian Kibble; it's an art form.

GOVERNMENT

Bulgaria's dictator, First Citizen Khrist Zarev, came to power in the wake of the '97 mess . He rules by peronist doctrine, and was elected after the usual outcry for a strong man to deal with the country's problems. Though this meant good-bye to democracy, the populace thought this was their route to a better future. People just don't learn from the past.

Now, twenty years after, the majority is still happy with him. Those who aren't keep their mouths shut or spend their dismal lives in some labor camp. Zarev doesn't take trouble lightly. To ensure critics stay few, Zarev instituted a system of public re-education that propagates basically two things: "democracy doesn't work" and "patriarchal systems ruled this planet for thousands of years, so is there a form of state that has been better tested?". Furthermore, he keeps his people well fed. Yeah right, you can buy Kibble cheaper than anywhere else. Lucky you.

Still, there are always free-thinkers. Zarev takes care of these with two tested methods. First, by uniting his populace against a common foe. Since war is not on his current agenda, Zarev periodically sets up tv-programs showing Turkey as Bulgaria's age-old enemy. Everytime Ethnic Turks protest these programs, nationalistic pogroms follow.

The second method is his National Council, which unites most major parties. Officially, it exists to advise the First Citizen on matters of policy. Inofficially, Zarev uses the council to prove that even basic democracy doesn't work. "Divide and Rule" is one of his favorite doctrines.

ECONOMY

Bulgaria's industry is slightly schizophrenic. While parts remain technologically in the mid-twentieth century, other parts, like chemistry and pharmacology are on par with any megacorporation. This makes Bulgaria susceptible to outside import restriction. Though the country is a producer of food, their machines depend on outsiders for parts.

This has made Khristo Zarev walk the fine line between east and west. On the one hand, Bulgaria remains a Russian bridgehead to the western Balkans. On the other hand, Bulgaria needs

the EC's to survive economically. Thus, Zarev has negotiated a free transit corridor for EC vehicles heading for Turkey, whilst steadily refusing the EC's money lure. Bulgaria's main trading partner continues to be the USSR, with Serbia second.

The pharmacological industry is the pillar of the economy. Various corporations produce drugs and medicines up to modern standards. Environmental and working condition restrictions are lax at best, Zarev ensures it. Bulgaria produces most of the European smart drugs of higher complexity. They are shipped via Serbia to the Mediterranean or, using Hungary as a stop-over, to the EC.

There are some black sheep who produce drugs without Zarev's consent. If they're not rooted out by the Secret Police, they concoct hideous substances for export to Organitskaya meatboys. The smuggling is done by Black Sea cigarette boats. Even though gunboats regularly patrol the Romanian and Bulgarian Coasts, there are not enough to intercept every silenced and stealthed speedboat. Of course, these boats also import illegal weaponry and cyberware for use in Eastern Europe. The haven of Varna has become a virtual freeport for smugglers, be they speedboat captains, or containerhips transporting "agricultural equipment" (i.e., tanks). The government makes half-hearted attempts at suppression, but their forces are needed elsewhere, and results are few.

THE SPLINTERS

POPULATION: 24 MILLION

LITERACY RATE: 90%

MILITARY: 300,000

LANGUAGES: ...CROATIAN, SERBIAN, SLOVENE,
GERMAN, RUSSIAN AND OTHERS

ETHNIC GROUPS: ...CROAT, SERB, BOSNIAN,
MUSLIM, MAGYAR AND OTHERS

Pre-war Yugoslavia was formed after WW I, when the Allies united two vastly different cultures. Slovenia and Croatia (to the north-west) had been part of the Habsburg Monarchy and had more ties to Austria than to the Balkans. Serbia, on the other hand, was part of the Russian slavic hegemony. This set the basis for the conflict of the early nineties. General Tito, Yugoslavian dictator since the 1950's, knew the strife colliding ethnicities would bring, and instituted an authoritarian dictatorship uniting Yugoslavia under one iron fist. When he died, and the government weakened, Slovenia immediately seceded. With the most powerful economy of all the Yugoslavian members, it saw its future in the assimilation of Western trade ties. After a brief struggle, other republics followed suit. The conflict between Croatia and the remnants of Yugoslavia continues. The reason for this prolonged struggle was set when it all began; the economic situation worsened steadily in the south. Serbia could not allow the breadbaskets to desert it, especially

while it remained in poverty. Of course, the destruction caused by civil war has since doomed the entire region's economy.

To further justify the war, Serb and Croat leaders took to hyping the ethnic rivalries. Armed ethnic groups began cleaning their proclaimed home region of other ethnicities.

But the conflict could not continue endlessly. Before long, the finite resources of the area dried up. Trade restrictions by surrounding countries put the final nail into Yugoslavia's coffin. The hundreds of thousands killed directly by war were augmented by an equal number of people killed through poverty. Around the turn of the millenium, the war efforts dribbled down, but steady low-intensity warfare continued. In time, the political leaders of the warring parties stepped down—to be replaced by another generation of stubborn nationalists.

But these new leaders had open eyes. They allowed limited trade between their respective states. This kept the survivors alive in spite of devastated infrastructures. Large parts of the former Yugoslavia had been laid waste. Entire regions were devoid of human life. No improvements were in sight.

Finally Serbs, Croats and Muslims came together for a series of inofficial talks. Their reasons were simple: cooperate or starve. For reasons of practicality, they accepted the current frontlines as a working base. From this, they agreed on several important points. Factories were declared demilitarized zones. Furthermore, all commercial transport would travel unhindered, unless it carried arms. Armored units were kept out of the crop fields. These agreements set a situation of armed peace. All parties involved knew that this was temporary.



An interruption occurred in 2018. Greece and Albania answered the pleas of Albanian minorities in Macedonia and invaded. The Serbian defenders were beaten in a month; Macedonian borders were closed by the invaders. Serbia was shocked. Even though Macedonia had been the poorest state within Yugoslavia, it was untouched by the war. The Serbian military had to respond, after all, several important facilities were set in Macedonia. But the army was exhausted after years of war and knew they had no chance against Greece or Albania. At least, not alone.

After heated arguments (and a couple of rolling heads), the Serb government approached the Croats with a deal. In return for Serb territory in the Krajina, the Croats would fight alongside their enemies in an effort to invade Albania. Three months later, a combined Serb-Croat force took parts of northern Albania. This punitive measure soon devolved into a stalemate that remains to this day.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina resembles old Lebanon—with Sarajevo the Beirut of the 20's. Various armies have divided the country into enclaves, each with its local lord. Serbs and Croats dominate sixty percent of the country, leaving the rest to the Muslims.

They got some assistance from muslim states like Iran. That of course, is a thing of the past. After 1997, the muslim forces were bolstered by refugees which doubled their armed forces, but equally doubled their supply problems. The situation is aggravated by the hordes of refugees fighting to regain their homes in other parts of the country.

The scattered nature of Bosnian society works contrary to any organized economy. The people live from what they scrounge; which isn't much. Some join the marauding soldier bands, while others try to make a living as small time herders.

Recently, major arms manufacturers have begun using Bosnia and Herzegovina as a live testing area. They lend out weapon systems to rival factions. Militech itself has a small base near the Adriatic Sea. They pay for this by supplying old guns, ammo and untested combat drugs to the local Croats. They also sell weapons to Greek smugglers, who in turn, ship them to Albanian and Serb partisans in Macedonia. Arasaka countered this by setting up a small office at Belgrade. Aside from the usual arms deals, they also smuggle in agents targeted on the Militech efforts in the area.

SERBIA

Serbia's situation has deteriorated so far that the country's economy is based on Eurobucks. The inflation has risen so far that even the state itself works with ecu. The black market handles eb, cigarettes, or currencies from neighboring nations. It's the only place people can get important stuff like bread and bullets.

The Serbian government, lead by President Milan Petrovic, tries to steer against this drift, but have so far not succeeded. The Croatian war drained the country. The populace now lives from smuggling via the Serb army. The army uses Wallenstein's



old method of feeding war, by war. That means Serb troops revived the practice of stripping conquered territories of their resources. Of course, this practice has only limited use, since major territorial gains are a rarity these last decades. Still, the army feeds its soldiers, which makes it a prime career for Serbs.

CROATIA

Croatia was (in pre-war times) a country serving the tourist trade. Back then, the Adriatic coast was dotted with hotels. With the start of the war, tourists stayed away, feared Serbian attacks. A fear was mostly unfounded, since the coastlines were far removed from the conflict. Nonetheless, the economy suffered.

But the situation was eventually improved by investors from Austria expanding their business towards the south. They brought goods and money into a country urgently in need of both. Croatian business now concentrates near Zagreb and in several guarded holiday resorts at the north end of the Adriatic.

SLOVENIA

Of all the former Yugoslavian states, Slovenia was the luckiest. After the brief secession battles, the country quickly found western economic links. It is now fully tied into the Austrian economy, which uses the country's cheap workforce. Equally popular are the tourist areas; cheap in relation to the nearby EC. As a result, Slovenia is fully industrialized.

THE MARGINS



THE UNITED KINGDOM

POPULATION:44 MILLION

LITERACY RATE:89%

MILITARY:835,000

LANGUAGES: ...ENGLISH (OFFICIAL), CELTIC,
GERMAN, FRENCH, HINDI,
PUNJABI AND OTHERS

ETHNIC GROUPS:CAUCASIAN, ASIAN,
CARIBBEAN AND OTHERS

—John Newell, Euro contributor

This is it! The most exciting, exhilarating country in Europe. The only European country that's been under martial law for the past twenty years.

So what if the rest of Europe think we're uncouth barbarians? Who cares? At least the UK is alive and kicking. It's not suffocating under the oppressive weight of Brussels like the rest of them.

OVERVIEW

First off, a couple of definitions. Britain (Great Britain to the snobs) consists of the countries of England, Scotland, and Wales. The United Kingdom (usually UK) consists of Britain and Northern Ireland. Don't worry if you get it wrong at first, even people born and bred here get confused occasionally.

England consists of three major sections. A generally low lying area to the South (the wide bit). A marshy area to the East; the Fens. The narrower neck heading North has narrow coastal plains with the Pennine mountain range running up the middle of it.

Scotland is also broken into three distinct areas. The Southern Uplands are a hilly area with plateaux. Then there's the Central Lowlands. Finally to the North are the Highlands, over half the country. As well as the many wide estuaries (known as Firths) there are also many Lochs (lakes).

Wales is almost pure mountains, with a narrow coastal strip.

Northern Ireland is virtually all flat land, with many rivers and Loughs (same as Scottish Lochs really). Due to the general flatness of the land there are many marshes.

The UK is renowned for its rainfall, and it's numerous names for rain. All joking aside, it does rain here a lot, except in the bad years. Bad years are years in which there is virtually no rain and the temperatures go through the roof. They seem to be getting more common these days, good years are becoming uncommon.

The majority (93%) of the UK's population is urbanised. Most live in cities, but many live in old ribbon developments that follow the major roads. Yes, the UK was a major centre of the

twentieth-century car cults. The government not only supported cars, they downright encouraged them!

Outside the cities, the land is intensively used for agriculture. 74% of the arable land is controlled by Imperial Metropolitan Agriculture (IMA), a corporate spin-off from the MLPC with the responsibility of providing the UK's food needs. IMA has the full power of the MLPC behind it and has no regard for who it tramples or how many national parks it destroys.

History

The UK, in various guises, was a major world power from the medieval period onwards. At its peak, the British Empire was the biggest single authority the planet has ever seen. During the twentieth century the Empire was reduced and replaced by the Commonwealth.

As the twentieth century progressed, internal stress and dissatisfaction spread through the UK. Many industries were nationalised early in the century to keep them going—only to be privatised again later in the century. Living conditions plummeted as unemployment rose. The citizens' confidence in the government hit an all-time low as those with jobs paid higher and higher taxes yet saw no return from their investment.

In 1999, it all fell apart. Welsh and Scottish nationalists joined the IRA in the fight against the British. Refugees from Hong Kong placed unexpected strain on the country's resources. Then the Wasting Plague hit in 2000, killing millions. The government collapsed, incapable of running the country.

It's said that the British and the French hate each other. Both countries claim this regularly. They've been fighting since the Norman conquest.

During the French revolution, the British were helping the French nobles; during WW1 & WW2, the British were the first to help the French. Now the French are helping the British royalists against the MLA.

Are these the actions of countries that hate one another?

Dex Williams on a good (coherent) day

In 2001, the army staged a coup. They placed the country under martial law until the situation could stabilize again. King Charles III refused to accept this as valid and was removed from office (after a small, bloody war). The majority of the population didn't even notice. They were too busy trying to survive. Government was provided by the Martial Law Provisional Council (MLPC) which replaced Parliament. The actual process of running the country was left with the existing civil servants on the basis that they knew what they were doing, so why change it.

Shortly after the coup, King Charles led an abortive revolt with the support of the Royal Marines and a few army units. Once the MLPC had dealt with it (and Charles), they began an under-cover operation to track down and eliminate the monarchy. It is widely thought that the main reason for Charles' revolt was to give other members of the Royal Family a chance to escape.

Over the past decades, the MLPC has become more and more like a feudal dictatorship. The council has been granting senior members of the military noble titles, a power that used to be restricted to the monarch. Many of these titles are hereditary—so much for the vaunted professionalism of the British Army. Giving themselves hereditary titles didn't do much good for morale within the army, what's the point of working hard if senior positions are permanently closed?

There's only one prison for convicted UK offenders, the Stockade on the Isle of Wight (probably the most stupid of the MLPC's social experiments); those convicted of minor or peaceful crimes are thrown in with the worst the country has to offer. Survival of the fittest generally gives those that survive serious sociopathic problems and gives the resistance ready-made soldiers.

⇨ REMEMBER THIS?

General Lord Beauvoir, LONDURBMARLAUTH, on behalf of MARLPROCO, herewith issues notice that the Provisional Authority will retain its guardianship of the British nation for so long as the present emergency requires, in stewardship for the day when a properly appointed democratic government may take up the reins of power. That is all.

—BBC announcement, London, 30 Jan. 2007

Doesn't look like we'll ever be allowed to vote for a British government again. Provisional? I think not.

Anonymous exec

London, March 2020

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Rumours abound as to the location of members of the royal family. The British just don't believe that DI5 could have been efficient enough to get to all of them.

Many believe that members of the monarchy are being held by the MLPC in cryogenic suspension. The location being either Wales or Cornwall.

Others feel that members of royalty are being protected by the Vatican. There were reported sightings of royal children in Vatican City shortly after the coup.

Yet others have claimed the royals are hiding out in the US; using the influence that Britain built with the US over the years.

So where are they? Do you think I'd make that information public if I knew?

THE KINGDOM

Welcome to Europe's most oppressed and violent society. Since the dissolution of Parliament and the declaration of Martial Law in 2001, the country has fallen apart. Most of Britain's cities are in a state of terminal decay. Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are in revolt. Nationalist feelings boil over under the weight of oppression. Monarchist insurgents attempt the overthrow of the Martial Law Provisional Council all over England.

Unfortunately for the resistance groups, their efforts are severely hampered by a lack of communication and co-operation, and by the best and most ruthless troops on Earth. The Lord Generals, being expert soldiers, use the maxim of 'Divide and conquer'. They have split the country into eight Martial Law Authorities (MLAs), with passes being required to travel between them. MLA borders are patrolled by Transit Supervision Police (TRANSUPOL, or 'trashers' to the rest of us) and, occasionally, by the Army. Passes are valuable, with the all-areas Open Travel Permit considered to be worth killing for (particularly if you have a record, and even if you don't, passes still take around 4-6 weeks to organise).

Fortunately for the resistance, the Lord Generals recently started fighting between themselves. Lords Fairbanks and Edwards have been begging their Southern associates for help that they don't seem to be getting. They're being buried in refugees from the fighting in Scotland and their infrastructures are falling apart. The council appears to be willing to send combat troops where necessary, but won't do anything about the people combat displaces.

Anything could happen in the next couple of years...

Europeans! Don't tell me we're Europeans!
We fight bloody wars to stop those poncey
French and rightarsed Germans from tak-
ing over the world. Now they run Europe
and tell everyone we're the barbarians.
Screw em!

London taxi driver



BORDER HOPPING

Jumping the MLA borders isn't anywhere near as hard as it looks. Most of the defences are cosmetic, and the 'trashers' are just plain incompetent, but what do you expect from army rejects? Do yourself a favour and watch a patrol in action. They amble along their assigned patrol route, rarely looking around. The only time patrols are a threat is when the trashers have been replaced by real army troops.

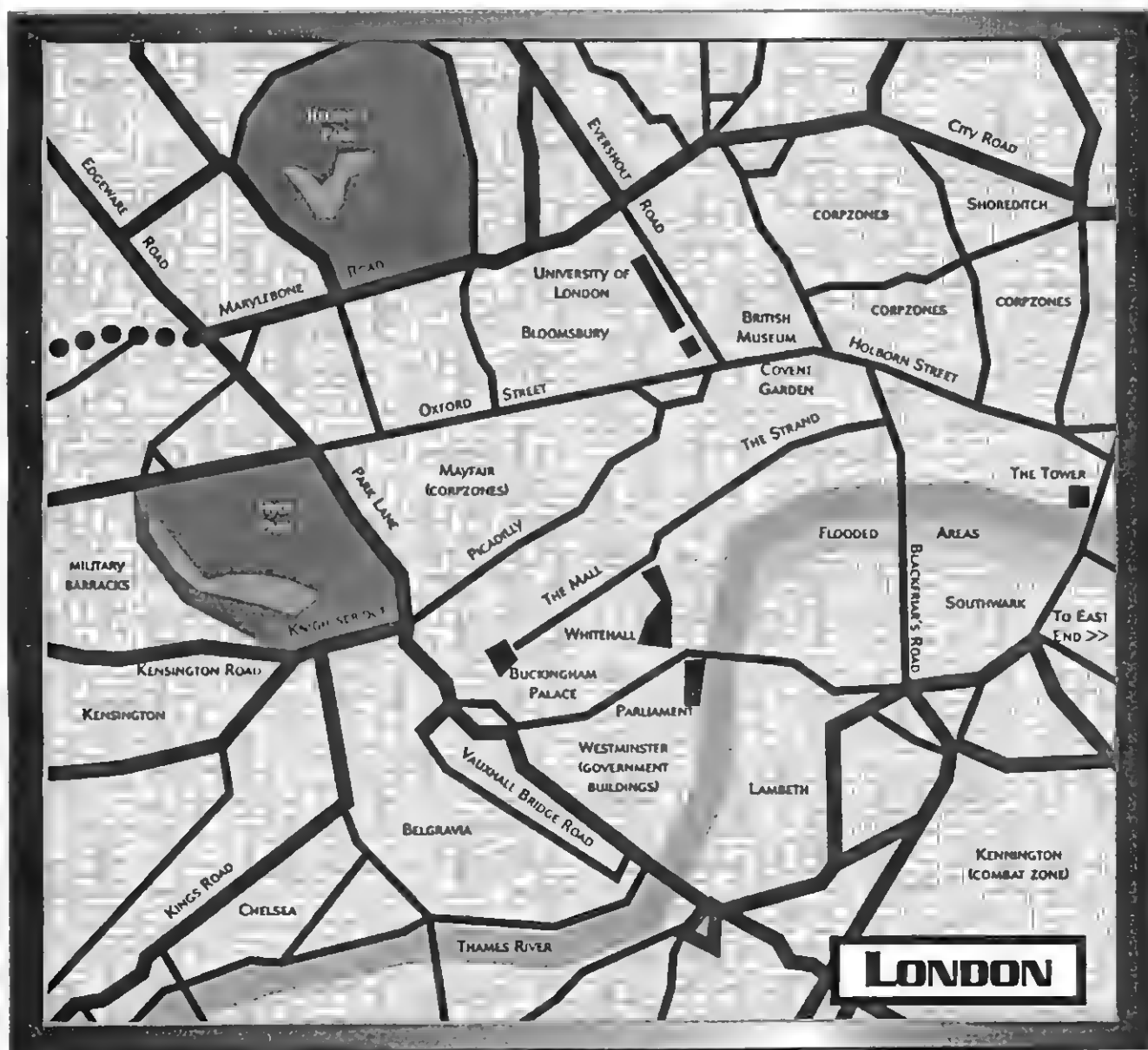
If you don't want to risk running the lines, then get yourself a permit. Any good fixer should be able to get you a permit, although not open travel, for one or two K.

THE CITIES

The MLAs are ruled from the cities, and the cities are the heart of British culture. Violent and desperate, vital and urgent, full of protest and idealism; the streets of Britain produce vicious gangs, hot rockers, ruthless solos, sharp netrunners and some pretty chill tech! Where the rest of the EEC appears content with its comforting Europap and soft plastic values, Britain still has that edge lacked by the Eurocrat-run plasticrete of France or Germany. Nowhere is this more evident than the British capital.

London

London is renowned all over the world as a city on the edge—whether you're looking for beta-test cyberware or the



LONDON



nastiest boostergang war you didn't want to get caught in. Its skyline dominated by the sinister black glass and steel of 1200 ft. Century Tower, and with its Eastern areas under a full foot of scummy water, London is a city where you're either very lucky—or very dead. Such is the Smoke's rep that 'punks from the West coast of the bad old U.S. (yeah, that's right dreckhead, NC, SF & LA) who move here find a suprisingly farmilair lifestyle....some of them even recommend the experience.

London is a city of contrasts. The glamour and luxury of Corp-controlled Mayfair against the permanently-flooded, rotting combat zone of the East End. The gleaming cybertech of "Memory Lane" against the permanently smogridden alleys and backstreets. The down and dirty bands playing the Marquee against the chromium superstars and gentlemanly atmosphere of Covent Garden. The discreet Eurosolos and Corp bodyguards of the City against the brutality of the infamous *London Machine* premier combat-soccer team (and their even more infamous fans).

Bristol-Kingswood

Bristol-Kingswood is a huge metropolis, being the administrative capital of the Southern MLA. If you want something done in the south, Bristol is the place you've gotta be to get it done. The centre of Bristol is an unusual mix of modern skyscrapers and old, protected buildings (though many of these are in the military authority area and inaccessible to most people).

In general, the town follows the decaying town principle: up-market centre, surrounded by decaying areas & slums, surrounded by newer suburbs. Of course there are some areas within the 'slum' ring that are in very good condition, usually redeveloped or originally very up-market. There are also some areas in the newer parts that are old and decaying from an older period, often the remains of older towns that have been subsumed into the greater metropolis. The MLA and Corporate areas ignore the local pattern of course. They don't allow their properties to degenerate.

The city centre itself has comparatively little nightlife due to the amount of clubs in nearby areas such as Clifton. The security level is very high due to the nearness of the MLA centre. It is very clean for a city centre as most people go to the surrounding areas to party (it's cheaper and there's less security). The clubs around here tend to cater to the more discerning members of the populace, mainly the city centre office workers and the upper echelons of the MLA who like to relax. All the clubs and even most of the shops and offices here run full weapon scans on everyone who enters.

Just down Park Street from the City Centre is Clifton. Clifton is Bristol's university quarter. It's filled with students, student flats, student bars, student clubs and the arty types who think living near students gives them some kind of

meaning. There are also a few who just like the atmosphere of the place and live here for the color.

The combat zones in Bristol are as rough as those anywhere else. The death zones are downright lethal to non-residents, even MLA patrols refuse to enter them. There are the usual rows of trashed housing blocks, vehicle wrecks and shops with more physical security than downtown banks. The residents are a mish-mash of those on the run, the unemployed, the unemployable, illegal immigrants, the unlucky and the sharks who feed on them all; as well as a few well-heeled edgies who 'just like the lifestyle'.

You've got to be desperate to try your luck in the zones. It's very difficult to be heard when you're a stranger with no rep in Bristol. None of the local movers will talk to you without being paid.

THE MARTIAL LAW PROVISIONAL COUNCIL (MARLPROCO)

LONDURBMARLAUTH: General Lord Beauvoir, London Urban MLA, London.

SMARLAUTH: General Lord Grey, Southern MLA, Bristol-Kingswood.

NOREASTURBMARLAUTH: General Lord Fairbanks, North Eastern Urban MLA, Cheshire Plains Conurb.

NORWESTURBMARLAUTH: General Lord Edwards, North Western Urban MLA, Tyne-Tees Conurb.

MIDMARLAUTH: General Lord Cornel, Midlands MLA, Birmingham.

WELSMARLAUTH: General Lord Kerr, Welsh Special MLA, South Welsh Conurb.

SCOTSMARLAUTH: General Lord Hill, Scottish Special MLA, Lanark-Lothian Conurb.

NIRIPAC: General Lord Mackenzie, Northern Irish Pacification Authority, Belfast.

Home Counties Military Zone

Home of the British Army and the MLA. The Military Zone is an area centred around the towns of Aldershot, Farnborough and Camberley and extending for twenty Kilometres in all directions. The Military Zone is one of the most protected areas in Europe. It's certainly the best-armed.

Within the Zone can be found all the primary army training areas, the army college, many army barracks and stores, weapons development facilities, as well as many civilian high technology research facilities. Its borders are always protected by army patrols because of the sensitivity of the area.

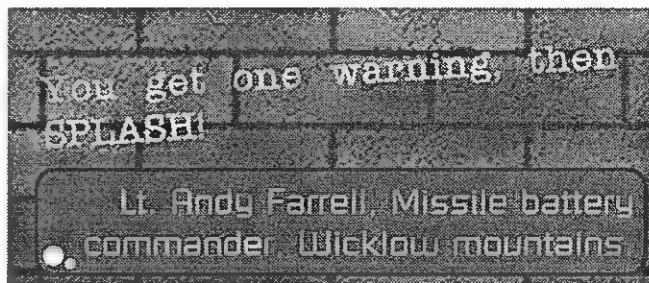
This is a strange area to visit. The police and MPs share policing duties, though the military police have seniority. There are many housing developments, most of which are



open to civilians and army personnel. The relaxed mix of army and civilian, along with the high standard of living (they don't have shortages in the MZ) and low unemployment levels have created a unique part of Britain with little unrest. Of course, if there is any unrest, it gets stomped on very quickly, heck the SAS is based here.

This is THE area of choice for those that can afford the massive bills which come with living here. The majority of Britain's top executives and almost all United Kingdom based executives from foreign corporations live here, regardless of where they work. Although it's home to over a million people, it's not urbanised in a big way, mainly consisting of small towns linked by military bases and housing

developments. The rest has been left as natural as possible for the military to train in, thus making it one of the most beautiful and natural areas of Britain.



IRELAND, ERIE

POPULATION: 4 MILLION
 LITERACY RATE: 92%
 MILITARY: 29,000
 LANGUAGES: ENGLISH (OFFICIAL), IRISH GAELIC
 ETHNIC GROUPS: CELTIC

—Sian Mac Mahon, Euro contributor

Welcome to Ireland, the most beautiful, relaxing country in the entire EC. Just don't mess it up or we'll mess you up, OK?

OVERVIEW

Ireland is a country shaped by its geographical and physical nature. Its mountainous and defiant countryside has resisted not only the climatic changes but also those attempted by man. All Irish infrastructure and communications routes follow the lie of the land instead of following the usual European procedure of boring holes through whatever is in the way. It's easier that way.

The European Fringe Effect

Being on the fringe of Europe Ireland is a popular destination for smugglers and people hoping to slip into Europe undetected. The unindustrialised nature of Ireland means that it is difficult to hide large amounts or technical goods in the country. Because of this the smuggling traffic is mainly people, information, small illicit goods (drugs, gems, precious metals), and luxury items.

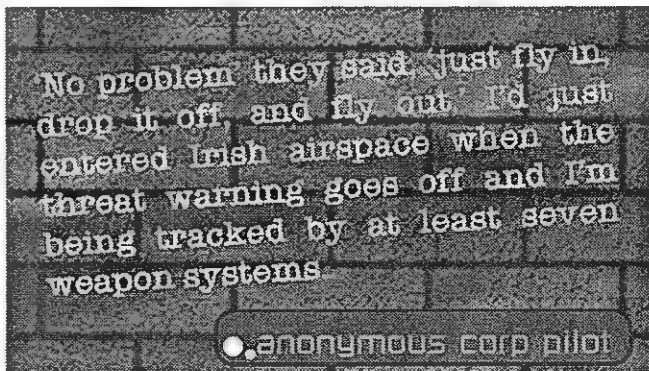
The usual smuggling method is to use a deserted cove. Sail in, drop off what you are smuggling, and have it picked up by your trustworthy local contact who will ship it on. There are complete seaside villages involved in the smuggling trade, but these deal almost exclusively in safe goods and are very selective about whom they deal with.

The local law enforcement departments generally know about the smuggling. They usually only act to stop it if they have received a complaint, or if the smuggled item breaches one of the unwritten rules that both sides seem to work by. Sometimes this lack of effort angers the EC or a corporation. Few attempts at independent action are made, however, as Ireland remains fiercely independent when it comes to law enforcement and tends to come down hard on any unsanctioned operations.

World's Largest Theme Park

During the twentieth century, Ireland remained relatively untouched by modern 'civilisation'. Due to this, and the physical constraints of the landscape, it was decided to keep Ireland as natural and unspoilt as possible and to promote this as its greatest feature. Many laws have been passed, both in Ireland and the EC to restrict the activities of corporations. They also put in place the means to impose heavy penalties on those who break any of the many 'Natural Preservation Acts'

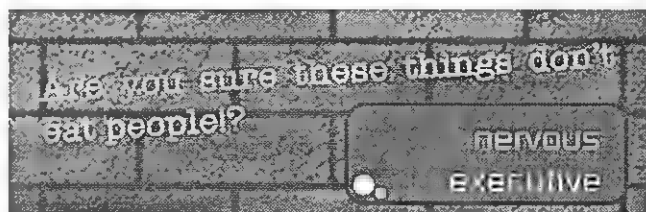
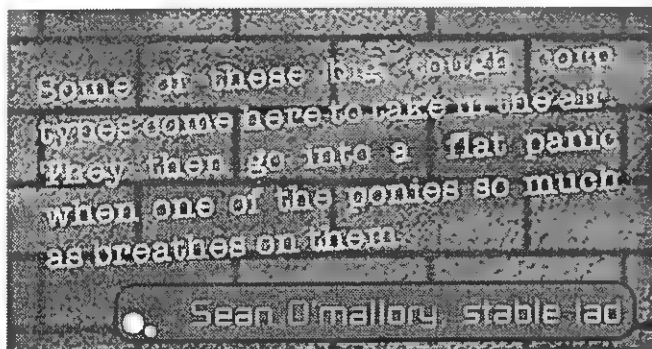
These restraints mean that all internal travel is by authentic, although non-polluting, replicas of 20th century or earlier vehicles. Even industrial and agricultural vehicles are replicas with the government giving grants to help people maintain the historical theme of the country. Any new buildings built have to be styled to blend in with the older buildings and out in the countryside all buildings are maintained in their original condition. Some dwellings have been given added and



have no modern conveniences, not even vids, to show exactly how people lived before the EC ensured it's equal lowest standard of living.

As the whole country is effectively, a theme park, many corporations locate their rest and stress relief centres here. The idyllic and peaceful surroundings provide the perfect environment for staff to rest, relax and commune with nature. There are also numerous government run conference centres here and many corporations use these as neutral ground for meeting their opponents in a low risk environment.

As well as indoor facilities, Ireland also offers some of the most spectacular countryside in Europe. The entire country is almost untouched by the world-wide climate changes and offers many chances to get really close to nature. This can be either camping, hiking, pony-trekking, or by taking on the role of a worker of some kind and actually living the life of the last century just like your grandparents would have done.



REGIONAL GUIDE

Dublin

The only major conurbation is Dublin, the capital, which lies on the east coast on the River Liffey.

It is the centre for all trade and commerce within Ireland. Most large corporations have at least a small office here as Dublin is one of the prime entry points into Europe. It boasts the only international airport and the main commercial seaport in Ireland.

Dublin is also one of the few places in Ireland where any form of modern industry is located. It is home to many high technology industrial plants. Other than these modern facilities great care has been taken to keep Dublin as untouched by progress as possible.

To the South of the river are the main official tourist attractions: the castle, the cathedral, and the university. To the North of the river is Phoenix Park with its wonderful animals and plants. Enough of the boring bits, the real tourist attractions are everywhere, the pubs. Ireland's pubs are famous the world over, don't miss them if you ever get the chance to get over here.

SCANDINAVIAN BLOC:

DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY, SWEDEN,
ICELAND, AND GREENLAND

POPULATION:29 MILLION

LITERACY RATE:98%

MILITARY:107,000

LANGUAGES:DANISH, FINNISH,
NORWEGIAN, SWEDISH (OFFICIAL),

ENGLISH, GERMAN, SAMI

ETHNIC GROUPS:MOSTLY CAUCASIAN

—Mikael Stornberg, Euro contributor

THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

Lands of the midnight sun, forested hills, and a variety of wildlife. A loose confederation of countries linked by culture, people, race and location. These are lands with deep links

between art, style and culture. Connections with the past are not forgotten either; styles, designs and lifestyle are often linked to our history.

These countries have been through many changes recently. Most have been brought on by the massive changes in the environment which have completely altered the face of Northern Europe. Many of the smaller Baltic islands have been disappearing as the sea level rises. The vegetation of the region has changed with the rising temperatures: what was once barren tundra and arctic waste is now bursting into life and becoming available as arable land. Simultaneously with this growth in available land there's been a drop in overall population. Quality of life is increasing in the area, just as fast as it's falling elsewhere.

• **DENMARK:** An isthmus to the north of Germany and its associated islands. Denmark has a massive agricultural industry and most of the mainland (Jylland or Jutland) is dedicated to it, as is Fyn (Funen), the islands. Over 94% of the population now lives in Copenhagen City which has expanded to cover the northern half of Sjælland (Zealand), hiding behind huge sea walls. Many of the other islands shrank as the sea level rose, and some have been lost completely.



• **FINLAND:** A land of vast natural beauty. Most of it is covered in forests, lakes and marshes, though they have suffered from pollution from both the mainland of Europe and the Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics. The majority of the population lives on the southern coastal plains in domed towns and cities. Finland's industry is an unusual balance between forestry-related industries and high technology. The country has lost ground to the rising Baltic; many of her lakes and marshes have become part of the sea.

• **NORWAY:** A long, narrow, highly mountainous nation which forms the Atlantic coast of Scandinavia. The mountains are most rugged to the South and West, getting slightly smoother to the North and East. Most of Norway's scenery is dramatic. Valleys and fjords created by Ice Age glaciers nestle between mountains. Mountain slopes are covered in forests, which are spreading again as the tundra disappears with rising global temperatures. Over 80% of Norway's population live in coastal towns and cities.

• **SWEDEN:** Sweden has long been the most developed of the Scandinavian countries. Blessed with a more than adequate variety of natural resources, Sweden had fewer problems than most countries coping with the Industrial and Information ages. As with Finland, most of the population is gathered in towns and cities on the Baltic coast.

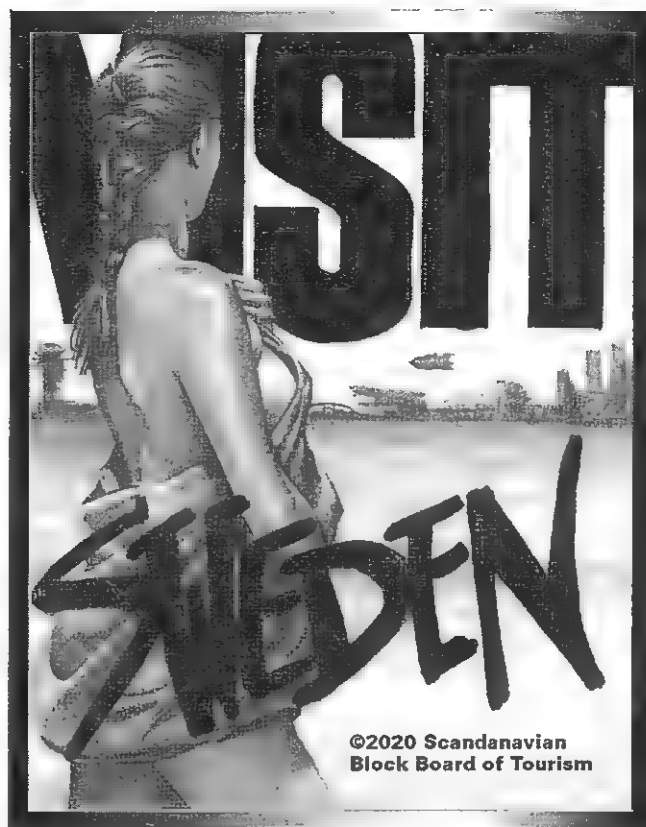
• **ICELAND:** A stark outcropping in the North Atlantic, is renowned for its volcanic activity. Volcanoes, thermal springs and earthquakes are all common. It has long been a popular tourist site for those willing to pay for the unusual, and where else can you bathe in a natural hot spring after skiing down a glacier on the slopes of a live volcano? Farming is no longer an important industry in Iceland, most of the population lives and works in Reykjavik in development and marine industries.

• **GREENLAND:** The largest island in the world (and also one of the most unusual). Officially, it's owned by Denmark, but it has its own government. Denmark is part of the EC, but Greenland isn't. Virtually ignored by the world for centuries, Greenland has recently become more interesting to developers as the glaciers retreat. Nuuk, the capital (formerly called Godthåb), has seen more development in the last decade than in the previous century.

HISTORY

After the fall of Rome, Scandinavia was one of the major power blocs in Europe, and one of its few cultural high points. What was lacking in natural resources was made up for by resourcefulness. Vikings from Denmark and Norway raided the countries on the North Sea and Atlantic, even going as far as the Mediterranean. They occupied most of Ireland, the north of Britain, the Normandy region of France, and much of Northern Germany. Viking explorers travelled vast distances, discovering and colonising Iceland, Greenland, and even North America.

During the Medieval period, the sheer numbers of the rest of Europe kept back the Scandinavians. They were hard-pressed to retain their lands, especially with the amount of infighting going



on between them. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Sweden was a major force in Europe, fighting many wars to control the Baltic. During the Napoleonic Wars Denmark sided with France, while Sweden spent the time consolidating its hold on Norway. Finland was captured by Russia, who kept control of it all century.

During the early twentieth century, Sweden remained impassively neutral while the rest of Scandinavia got trampled by Germany and Russia during the world wars. Finland broke from Russia during the Russian Revolution, and fought many wars to stay independent—though continually losing territory.

After the wars, Denmark was one of the founder countries of the European Community. Although having more in common culturally with Norway and Sweden than the rest of Europe, Denmark saw a place in the future for a combined Europe. Sweden's neutrality and Finland and Norway's lack of interest led to an unusual situation where closely-related countries were separated by political alignment.

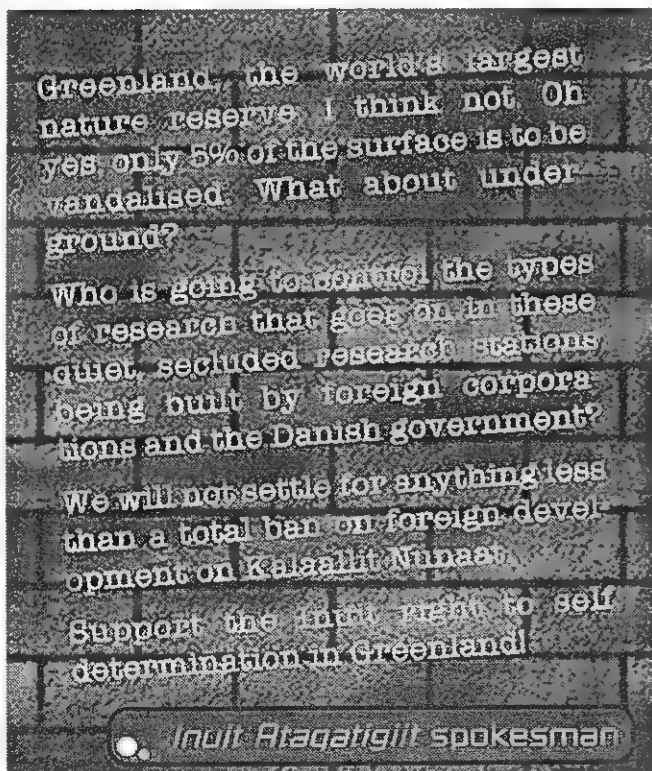
For a few years, Finland, Norway and Sweden countered Europe's burgeoning economic power by forming the Scandinavian Bloc with the Baltic League (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). The Scandinavian Bloc was short-lived; destroyed from within by infighting between the Baltic League states.

Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland's acceptance of Europe's offer to become associate members of the EC reduced the tension in the area. It kept Denmark in Europe and simulta-

neously reduced the chances of violent competition between Europe and the old Scandinavian Bloc. There is no sign of any of the four becoming full members of the EC in the near future, they still don't quite trust the rest of Europe.

Greenland is still out on a limb regarding Europe. As part of Denmark, they have some protection from Europe. Interpol is permitted to work there and European citizens may visit without visa requirements. On the other hand, the EC directorates have no control over them, though they may make suggestions.

In March, 2020, Greenland made a bold move to prevent corporations getting too much control of the country. By unanimous vote, the government decided to restrict development to 5% of the country's surface. The rest is to be left untouched for future generations and scientific research. This is on top of existing legislation that prohibits any new developments that produce any dangerous emissions whatsoever. The biggest change in Greenland recently has been a sudden rise in its popularity as a rich person's playground. Highly luxurious, secluded residences are being built for millionaires willing to pay a fortune for Greenland citizenship and the right to live on the island.



BACKGROUND & CULTURE

The most prominent aspects of Scandinavian culture to outsiders are our bold use of color in everything from clothing to

parking lots, and our use of space in interior design. There's a lot more to our culture than that.

Scandinavians share a lot of the same cultural heritage. We are descended from peoples who battled against both the elements and foreign powers for survival. For centuries, Scandinavia's biggest exports were mercenary troops. After the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire and the decline of culture in Europe these same troops went on to conquer much of the European coastline. After this, the main aim was self-preservation as the Scandinavian nations realised the futility of aggression and followed a more peaceful track, a track we continue on today.

We consider ourselves to be more refined and independent than most other peoples. We certainly lead healthier lifestyles. Healthy eating is considered essential here, even our fast food is healthier than most countries' normal diets. Hygiene is a fundamental principle of life and health education is taken very seriously. During the 'Dark Ages' the Vikings were the only peoples of Europe to believe in the values of bathing and cleanliness and Scandinavians have continued to be in the forefront of healthy living.

Our governments realise how much a healthy lifestyle means to us and ensure that they do as much as possible to enable us to keep it. Cheap (but good quality) housing is always available for families with children, as is food, clothing, medical treatment and money to support them. People found abusing these rights are severely punished and get treated as pariah by the majority.

After World War 2, Scandinavia embraced technology with a fervency unseen in the rest of Europe. Computers, communications, vehicles, weapons, all were taken by Scandinavians and modified. Demand rose as they mixed functionality with styling, treating the two as interlinked in ways no others could. By the end of the century increasing demand for Scandinavia's innovative designs had led to them having far and away the highest level of technology in the region.

This technological lead continues, although many of our industries have changed their specialities to keep up with the changing face of the world. At present, much of our technological effort is going into alternative theories. Advanced robotics are becoming more viable as artificial intelligence becomes more common and more understood. Walking vehicles, a long time Scandinavian speciality, are now being equipped with virtually intelligent brains to function as stand-alone forest workers in areas it is too dangerous to send people.

Much of Scandinavia's technology has been redirected to survival, changing the way we live to suit the new face of the world. Scandinavia has seen many changes since the late twentieth century, mainly brought on by climatic alterations.





Temperatures have risen, increasing the range of crops that can be grown and the amount of land that can be used, but causing the oceans to rise, eating away at the shorelines. Ozone layer depletion has made it dangerous to be outside for extended times, especially in the far north where the ozone layer fades away almost to nothing. The 60 degrees North latitude line has been defined as the danger line. Beyond this line it is dangerous to be exposed to the sun for any time at all during summer, though the short day and low level of the sun during winter makes it safer then.

As more land has become available, so we have extended our cultivation. We have also developed new crops that flourish on the barren land that remains where snow, glaciers and permafrost have retreated. New trees have been bred that can grow on the steepest mountains, thus ensuring the continued availability of wood. All our crops have been modified so that they can not only survive the airborne pollution levels, but even help to clear pollution. We are lucky that the climate changes that are making much of the world uninhabitable are making life somewhat easier for us by increasing our natural resources.

Sea walls have been built around the mainland areas and larger islands to keep the sea out. The sea walls also protect us from the effects of sea borne pollution, the Baltic and North Seas being both highly polluted. Unfortunately, many smaller islands have been lost. Especially noticeable is the loss of the Skerries between Stockholm and Finland, a unique collection of small islands that are now almost all gone. Ultraviolet resistant domes have been built over many towns (and parts of cities) to reduce the effects of ultraviolet bombardment and protect the citizenry from skin cancer. The domes also help protect us from the acid rains that regularly come from the West and South. It is now compulsory for all vehicles and those buildings not protected by domes to have UV-resistant windows.

Robotic and remote equipment has been designed to perform much of the extended outdoor activity; prevent dangerous exposure. Their operators work either from nearby communities or from specially designed sealed workshacks. New working communities beyond the 60 degree danger line are now built with underground sections for use during the summer.

All this technological innovation is not being used purely for Scandinavia's benefit. As these same problems beset other countries so we are able to help them out, licensing or selling them the equipment they need.

The climate changes are causing many problems with our traditional recreations. Outdoor sports have always been the most popular activities in the region. Boating is feasible at the moment on inland lakes, but the joys of sailing the seas in small sailcraft have been lost to us for now, possibly

forever. Fishing is also possible inland, though it is now carefully regulated, but real sea fishing has gone. Hiking and hunting are just too dangerous to be fun, the amount of protective clothing necessary make it too uncomfortable to be the relaxing freedom it should be. Skiing is still possible in winter, though we have to travel to the far North and do our skiing at lit resorts. Ice skating is now rarely possible on lakes and rivers; they just don't freeze properly in winter.

The loss of our traditional recreations has had a massive effect on our culture. Sure, we have indoors sports, we still have ice hockey in winter, we have soccer and combat soccer in summer, but far too many of us are no longer able to relax the way we want to and used to. This is probably one of the main causes for many of the breakdowns in our traditional lifestyle and the recent increases in violent behaviour, especially on the weekends.

THE NEUTRAL MARKET

Scandinavia has long been known for its, erm, liberal approach to life. The basic view is that as long as it doesn't hurt others without their consent you're free to do what you want. The 'Neutral Market' is a natural offshoot of this.

Scandinavian countries permit an unusual amount of freedom to their citizens and visitors. This is in great contrast to the main European countries where restrictions are a way of life. This freedom has lead to two sources of income for Scandinavia: tourism and exports.

Tourism is growing in popularity as time goes on. Europeans are thronging to Scandinavia to enjoy the luxuries available that are denied them at home.

Violent and erotic braindances beyond the limits permitted in Europe are available in public VRcades. Soft drugs are available in virtually all bars in every major town without the excessive duties the Europeans impose. Harder drugs are available at special licensed salons, although combat drugs are totally illegal—possession is enough to get you a long holiday at the government's expense.

Clinics can provide you with any cyberware you desire. Scandinavian clinics have some of the best reputations in the world. Not only do they provide good quality cyber at reasonable prices, but they also have the most experience in easing the union between metal and meat. Braindance sims are run on prospective clients so they can experience the change they're asking for in advance. Specialised psychologists use psychotherapy and drugs before and after operations to reduce the trauma to a client's psyche.

The long and short of it is: Europeans travel to Scandinavia to revel in forbidden fruit. They want to try, and enjoy, all those things the EC tries to protect them from. They're rebelling against the Euro big brother—and Scandinavia makes it as safe and painless as possible for them.



Exporters are something else completely. They make their money by running illicit or highly-taxed goods across the border into the EC proper. By land, sea and air they go to make their fortune, improve their lifestyle, or just for the rush.

Some are glory hunters hoping to pick up that elusive super cargo this time. They take big risks, if they're caught they face stiff sentences which is why they are usually armed to the teeth or use fast stealth vehicles to avoid capture. The best of the glory hunters go on to become professional border runners, working to contract. Others play it soft and slow, a few vials of drugs hidden in the Aquavit, a couple of pairs of wolvers in with the computer parts. The risks are far lower, and they often make regular trips to keep up their lifestyle. Yet others play it as a game, taking legal items across just to avoid some of Europe's ridiculous tax levies.

Just goes to show, wherever there's borders separating what's allowed and how much things cost, there'll be people willing to take risks to even them out.

⇒ SCANDINAVIAN CLINICS

Scandinavia has some of the best cyber clinics around. Six of the Top Ten Clinics of 2020 are in Scandinavia.

Some of these clinics can make a full body conversion as trouble free as upgrading the modules in your Kiroshis. Some will pamper to your every need and treat you like royalty while you improve yourself.

Of course, there are less-respectable clinics that use the Scandinavian reputation and charge huge prices without providing the corresponding care. So don't just leap over there and think any old clinic can do the magic job.

Be careful, check around, and for your stability's sake, make sure you pick the right place.

—Pop Tech, the Magazine of Popular Technology

REGIONAL GUIDE

Stockholm

Stockholm is fairly typical of Scandinavia's cities, a homogenous meeting of the old and new. Built on a series of islands, Stockholm was founded in the thirteenth century. It grew to importance as a trading port, something it excels at today.

The best way to get the full impact of Stockholm is to arrive by sea. Hiding behind its brightly coloured sea walls is a sprawling metropolis situated on twenty islands. Once through the huge lock gates one sails between the islands before getting to the spectacular vista of the old harbor. Meticulously kept, the harbor is a tribute to nineteenth century architecture with spectacularly embellished four- and five-storey buildings along the harbor front.

Sweden's sea walls were started early in the century to protect many of the smaller islands. As the sea continued to rise, the priority changed to saving mainland communities. The sea walls, as they now exist, run along the coast of the mainland and the most populated islands. In many cases, the walls have blocked off bays and river estuaries. The water level inside the sea walls is now six feet below sea level and huge one way pipes use the power of outgoing tides to keep the water level inside the walls from rising. The massive locks in the sea wall at Stockholm permit ships smaller than super freighters or tankers to go from the sea to the harbor. The larger ships and submarines aren't permitted inside the old harbor and have their own port built on the outside of the wall on the old islands of Namdö and Runmarö.

From the old harbour, the city centre surrounds you: hotels, restaurants, bars, museums, shops and more, the city centre has the visitor and tourist in mind. A variety pack of old and newer buildings date from the last two centuries. It is built on ten islands joined by many bridges and canals; travelling by water is a popular choice. One big advantage of the sea walls is they keep out the Baltic pollution, permitting the water in the city to be kept clean. This clean water has provided Stockholm with a unique feature, a harbour that is safe to visit and even fish or swim in.

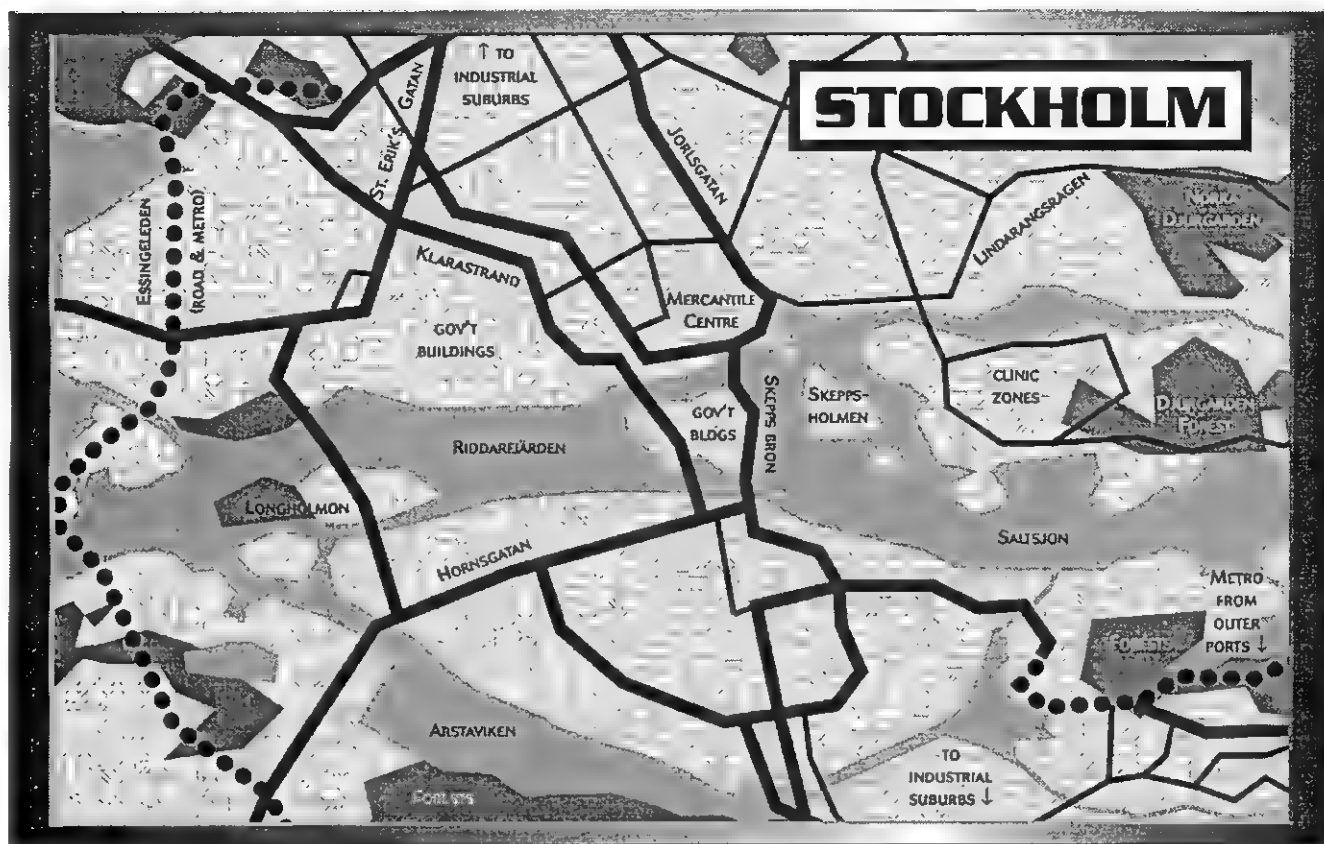
During the day, the streets are generally calm as residents and tourists alike stroll down the avenues and take in the sights. The scents of coffee, bread and cakes fill the air. The police are visible and courteous, but stamp hard on trouble.

At night, the pace hots up as bars and clubs open up for business. Garish neon lights the streets; hookers of all kinds emerge and the air becomes heavy with the smell of people and drugs. The police presence seems to close in on itself. The same number of police form themselves into larger, heavier-armed groups, ready to deal with serious trouble. There aren't problems every night, but they're guaranteed on weekends. The biggest problems tend to be Euro tourists either strung out on things they're not used to, or who've taken on more cyber than they can handle.

Stockholm's gangs tend to avoid the city centre most of the time. The only gangs based in the centre itself are upper-class poser gangs, due to the high costs of housing. Another consideration is that the bridges providing access to city centre are too easy for the police to block, preventing escape.

The city centre is going through changes at the moment. Government legislation has meant it is now essential to protect the citizens from ultraviolet rays. UV proof sheeting is being placed between buildings to protect the streets. Once it is com-





pleted, the city centre will be more comfortable as well as safer, but for now the work is causing chaos in the streets as they are regularly blocked by workmen and their equipment.

Outside, the residential and industrial suburbs. They sprawl eastward as far as the old city of Örebro. These are generally far more modern than the centre. Often the suburbs are built for a specific purpose, then replaced completely when that function is no longer required. The popularity of Sweden's clinics in recent years has led to there being entire suburbs dedicated to medicine.

Some residential suburbs have become derelict, mainly twentieth-century housing developments. These suburbs have turned into no-go slum zones where violence is fast becoming a way of life. These zones are also home to most of Stockholm's violent gangs who often rampage into other areas. Fortunately for the police and other residents, these areas aren't contiguous, so outbreaks of violence are easily contained.

This is not a city to go to in the hope of picking up some work. If you've got a job lined up, then there's no problem. But if you haven't you will find it very difficult to be in the right place to meet the right people. The locals don't take too well to newcomers who think they can just walk in and be taken seriously. Grooming the right contacts is essential.

It's a great city to meet at, but difficult for Edgerunners to work in. The cops are exceptionally efficient where serious

crime is concerned. They tend to treat minor offences in a half-hearted way, but anything involving violence or Sweden's prosperity is taken very seriously.

All in all, Stockholm is an enjoyable place to stay. Generally peaceful, but with enough action to keep your reflexes awake.

Helsinki

Helsinki is unusual for a Scandinavian city. Unfortunately, it is just a little bit north of the 60 degree line. In order to prevent having to close down the entire city during the summer, the city government decided to dome the entire city. The process hasn't been completed yet, but it's well under way. The coastal areas have all been domed in, and the rest should be completed by 2028.

The technique employed in Helsinki is the forerunner of many dome projects in Scandinavia. Instead of trying to build huge domes kilometres wide, smaller domes have been built that are only a few hundred metres wide. The domes are adjacent to cover large areas, and joined together by tubes to link separate areas. All domes have emergency access points for both ground and air traffic, as well as standard accesses.

The coast nearby has the traditional walls to keep out the sea. Helsinki just has its domes; they are reinforced on the sea front to keep the sea out. The harbour piers are attached to the side of the domes and are built up whenever the sea rises too close to the top.



The view from inside the domes at the harbours is unusual, there you are standing on what used to be the waterfront and the water is in front and almost above you. It's one of the most unusual things you'll ever experience, standing there knowing all that's between you and the Baltic is a few millimetres of transparent plastic.

The domes have provided certain advantages, such as a more controlled environment; temperatures tend to remain comfortable. They have also brought on new problems such as permanently high moisture levels. As the first city in Scandinavia to use domes, problems tend to catch Helsinki unawares, but they haven't caused any unsolvable emergencies yet.

If you do go to Helsinki, don't forget to visit the Museum of Automation. In the museum you'll find not only early automatons and robots, but also early cybernetic developments and demonstrations of some of the latest developments in cyberware and related fields. You can even drive one of the first functional walking vehicles and one of the latest experimental combat walkers.

Other than the environmentally-controlled geodesic domes, Helsinki is just like any other Scandinavian city. A nice city centre with an outstanding range of architectural styles surrounded by sprawling suburbs. It's great to visit, but expensive to live there.

RUSSIA

POPULATION:160 MILLION
LITERACY RATE:95%
MILITARY:1.3 MILLION
LANGUAGES:SEE BELOW
ETHNIC GROUPS:RUSSIAN, TATAR,
UKRAINIAN, CHUVASH,
BASHKIR, BYELORUSSIAN,
MOLDAVIAN, AND OTHERS

—Amalia Mironoff, Local Reporter Solo Of Fortune, Moscow

OVERVIEW

To Europeans, Russia has always been the Great Bear to the East. Most of the time it slept and when it woke, nations would fall. During the course of history gigantic armies would emerge irregularly from the depths of the Taiga, shoving away anything in their wake. From Mongols to the Red Army, Russian influence was mainly felt in the form of a major invasion every other century.

Within Russia things largely stayed the same throughout the centuries. Since after the defeat of the Golden Horde, Russians would live in a simple system. The Tsar ruled a collection of local lords who in turn exploited their subjects. The farmers and other lower classes didn't fare well under this system. They had no education to speak of, were bound to their lords and had no real rights in the government. The only comfort they found lay in the orthodox catholic church. Even more so than the roman catholic church, it excelled in mysticism, promising a better life beyond the earthly horror. With this in mind it is understandable why the Russians took so long to start a revolution. Why bother?

In the meantime the lords and ladies wasted their people's money in the casinos of Germany and other countries. They were known and feared for their bad behaviour in any major cultural centre. Still, they brought in lots of rubles, which were worth something back then.

This way of life also explains Russia's late introduction into the industrial age. You simply can't build an industrial base when nine tenths of the populace can't write their own names. Russia's handicap in technological developments stems from this time and continues to this day.

The communists decided to change all that. The October Revolution of 1917 was fought between the tsarist army and two rivalling revolutionary forces. The Mensheviks propagated a more western approach and, though they were superior in numbers, were subsequently put down by the Bolsheviks. The latter were lead by one Lenin, who took his name from a tsarist work concentration camp near the Lena river.

Lenin's rule was as iron-fisted and paranoid as could be. Some of his many accomplishments were the socializing of all business, the murdering of all tsarists he could get hold of, as well as many critics of his regime. To better control the various minorities within his realm, he instituted a series of resettling programs. His plan was to move Russians into the minorities' territories to split up the homogenous population. Other minorities didn't fare as well. Hundreds of thousands of royalists, farmers and intellectuals died in his concentration camps.

His methods were used to lesser (or greater) extent by all of his successors up to Gorbachev. All of the old men had gone paranoid by the time they reached their positions. The years of political infighting, backstabbing and intrigues took its toll on them. Not that this differs much from western leaders...

When Gorbachev assumed power, the economic breakdown of the Soviet Union was already more than apparent. He knew that things would have to be changed if the USSR was to survive. One of his bolder steps was to reinstitute pri-





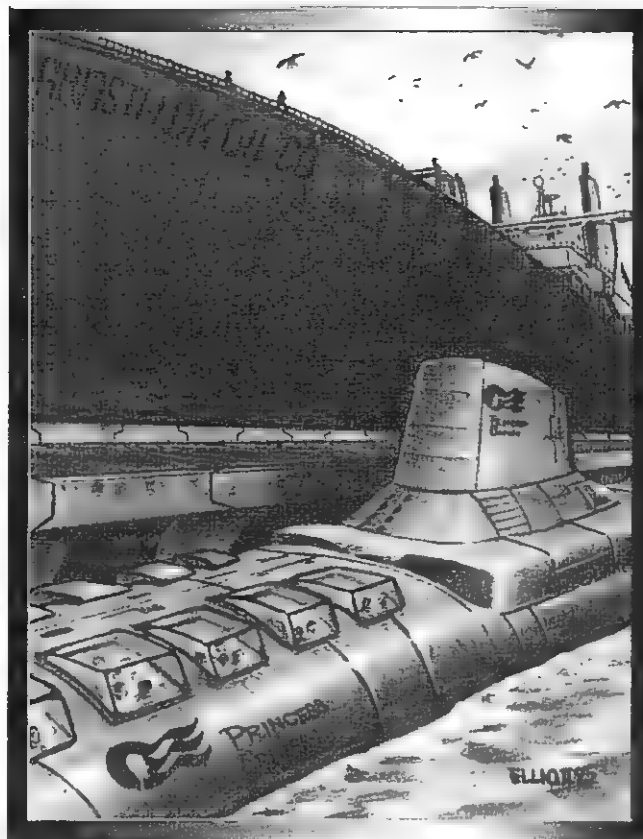
vate ownership. Thus he set the base for economic growth. He also saw the massive resources spent in the military. To stop this unsatable giant, he decreased influence on the central European states and the Soviet republics. This came to a head in the great changes of 1989, when the former East Bloc suddenly became 'democratic' states. Gorbachev's coup de grace was the transformation of the former Soviet Union into the Soviet Federation, granting its members the status of sovereign countries. Of course, he received a lot of flak from colleagues, but he had the support of the people who were hoping for better times.

Gorborev, Gorbachev's successor, continued the reforms. But his main problem were the secessionist movements within the various republics. Even the tiniest tribe in the giant state suddenly took hold of the new freedom and tried to set up their own little nation. Most of these would-be nations had a zero percent chance of survivability for economic reasons. Others were too important because of the treasures waiting in their soils. These were kept a part of Russia—often by force. But things couldn't continue this way. Thus, Gorborev had to find a solution and fast.

He founded the new and improved Union of Sovereign Soviet Republics. This was a collection of independent states akin to the EC with their own foreign policy and army. They were all united by a free trade zone that encompassed most of the former USSR. To lessen the influence some states had on key industrial facilities and natural resources, Gorborev convinced the states' leaders to resocialize the key industries. Thus oil and coal industries were given independent beurocracies which were theoretically governed by delegates from all participating states.

All these reforms stoked the anger of the old socialist hardliners. In an effort to bring the country back to its glorious old socialist ways, they allied with the remains of the KGB. Although the KGB had been disbanded by Gorbachev a couple of years earlier, their agents had found their way into the new Ministries of Interior of the various republics. Together they staged a coup that was later to be known as the Nights of Fire. Armed KGB troops and socialists clashed with loyal army units in a short and bloody conflict that raged all across the Neo-Sov. The rebellion was put down fast since the rebels had overstretched their means to spread fire to all republics. Nonetheless, the cost in men and material was high.

The Nights of Fire gave the directors of the biggest industry, SovOil, a welcome excuse to apply for their own security force. They argued that the Soviet Army could not effectively defend all of SovOil's facilities from Jakutsk to Kiew. The growing nationalism in the republics made security at key facilities all the more important. The request was granted and SovOil began signing on troops.



This proved to be Gorborev's downfall when the Soviet Corporate Rebellion took place in 2002. SovOil declared itself fully independent of the state, turning into a giant corporation. The Government saw this as a threat to inner security and reacted accordingly. But the republican forces were no match for SovOil's highly motivated troops equipped with the latest technology. Grudgingly, President Gorborev admitted defeat and let SovOil go. This blow was fuel to the fires of his critics. Gorborev resigned a few years later, broken in stature.

His successor was Igor Starobin from the Ukraine. His first couple of years were marked by efforts to rebuild what had been damaged. When the republics had recovered sufficiently, new shouts for national freedom were heard by minorities and republics alike. Surprisingly, it was SovOil who countered these movements. SovOil had a vested interest in peace and stable economic surroundings. Thus the corporate directors made deals with the leaders of the secessionist movements—and used force wherever diplomacy failed. With these actions, though entirely undercover, SovOil confirmed its status as the most powerful force in the Neo-Sov. Their resources, troops and sheer political weight made them the driving force behind the continued existence of the Union of Sovereign Soviet Republics.



Mother Russia

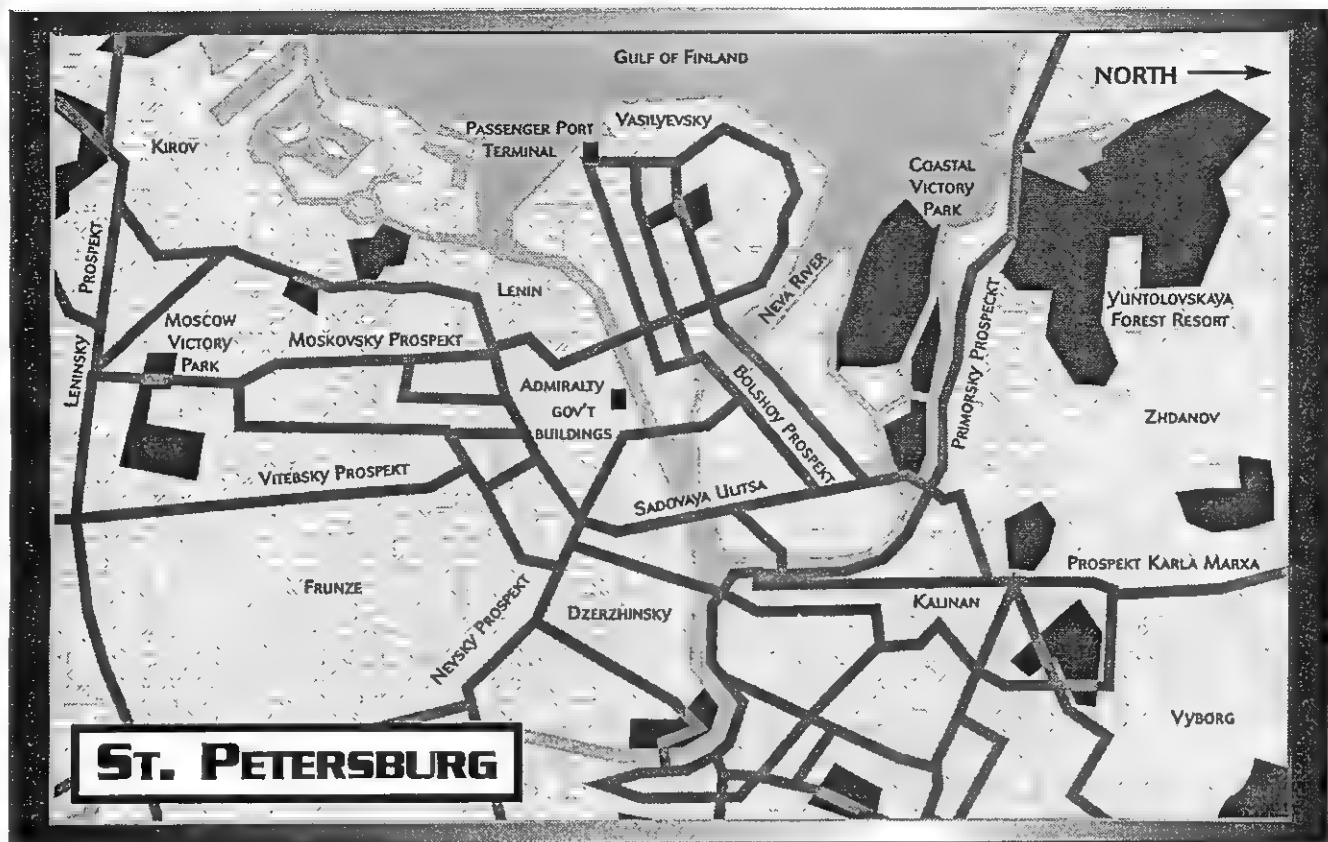
The Beauty and the Beast. She's very beautiful, you know. Once you step out of the cities you can see so much natural wilderspace around like any Easie wouldn't believe it. Europe is such a dense place. In Russia you have small isolated pockets of humanity and lots of untamed nature. Okay, I'm exaggerating this a bit but believe me, this country is big enough that there are some places, people have never set a foot on. I've been in places that look like they've untouched for the last ten thousand years.

Of course things changed a lot in the past hundred years or so. Much of the arable land around the cities is now devoted to growing CHOOH-wheat and stuff, but once you move into Northern Siberia you can still go to bed with a wolf howling a lul-

laby. That is, if you stay away from the SovOil installations there. Apart from owning half the country, they are the greatest polluter I've ever seen. Remember the Exxon Valdez oil slick in the 90's? These bastards have the power to cover up anything they want. From little leaks in the pipelines to broken tanker subs, wherever there is SovOil you can bet on an oil slick not far away. And these things happen quite often. Just imagine the amount of oil leaking unchecked from the drilling sites. It's horrible. In another fifty years even the last pond in the Siberian Tundra will sparkle in all colours of the rainbow.

This is Mother Russia; the beast. But there are other beasts as well. In the populated areas you have three forces to fear. The State, the Organitskaya, and SovOil. All three share an equal amount of power in the Russian's lives. The





ST. PETERSBURG

State is ruled by President Zhirinov. He has the power western leaders can only dream of. You know, things are a little different here than elsewhere. Russia and its neighboring countries never experienced Humanism or a Renaissance. As a result, the glorious ethics of the West (which no one gives a damn about these days) are somewhat alien to these people. I'm not saying the Russians are uncivilized brutes. This would be equally far away from the truth. It's just that the Russians and all those peoples living in their hegemony, have a much wider range of feelings than, say, the average Prussian. They can at once be awfully hospitable to friends and friends of friends but at the same way they can show forms of brutality a marine sergeant would envy them for. Many faint-hearted westerners don't understand that, but to them it's only natural, like vodka for example.

Oh yes, we were talking about the three evils in this country. Since the emergency decrees of the nineties, the president has the power to make his own laws without consent of the parliament if need be. This power is bolstered by the GRU, the Russian military secret service. The GRU was parallel to, but now the successor of, the KGB, which was the successor of the Tsar's secret service. As you can see, paranoia has a long tradition in Russian politics. As with all of these giant bureaucratic entities, it is only the name that changes over the time. I

heard that there is still a large percentage of old KGB agents working for both the GRU and the Interior Ministry. They were reinstated in the "new" service because of their abilities or because they had experience. You simply can't build an organization from scratch that's supposed to span all of Russia. Their methods didn't change a bit either; they are still as brutal as they once were. So take care, eco-terrorism in Russia brings you in contact with the GRU and likely as not SovOil's black ops units—which means an unmarked mass grave somewhere in the Taiga.

The Organitskaya (Mafia) is the second evil spirit infesting Mother Russia. Under communist rule they were checked by the KGB, which didn't allow any other power alongside of their own. In the wild years of the nineties, when the Iron Curtain came down and capitalism stormed the walls of communism, they emerged with a vengeance. By now they are a state within the state, collect their own taxes (Schutzgeld) and have their own armies. Luckily, they don't cooperate. If they were to unite they could have about the same power as the state. But the dissension between the over eight thousand syndicates in the Neo-Sov saves us from that fate. Most of the time they fight their petty turf wars against one another—or against the police, who are trying to contain the use of heavy weaponry.

A FEW STATISTICS

- There are over **8000** syndicates operating within the Neo-Sov, of which 200 operate internationally.
- There are over **180,000** thousand active members within and more than 10,000 without the Neo-Sov.
- About **80%** of all Russian businesses pay some form of protection money.
- **40-70%** of all policemen of lower grades are reported to be corrupt

Russian syndicates work basically along the same lines as other syndicates around the world. Their bosses are called "Thieves-in-Law" who collect about one third of all profits made to pay for families, police politicians and other overhead costs.

Talking of politicians. The reach of the Mafia extends well into the various ministries where they influence decisions about state contracts, building sites and such. This is the real danger coming from the Syndicates. Their corrupting influence extends so far that in some areas they virtually become the state. In these areas they can and do what they want, brutally oppressing their compatriots. Of course the relationship between Mafia and populace can take many different forms. I've seen villages where the local Thief had the position of a mayor. His influence was welcomed by the locals

because he would keep them fed and give them some form of safety. The syndicate was later eradicated by SovOil black ops teams. SovOil wanted a greater word in local politics and had to eliminate their competition, I suppose. Sometimes the difference between a large corporation and a major syndicate can only be measured in varying shades of grey.

SovOil is the final and greatest bane of Mother Russia. They are everywhere, their moles work in governments and syndicates alike and they are virtually omnipotent if need be. There is virtually no single Russian village without some kind of SovOil office. SovOil gives me the creeps.

RUSSIA AND THE SECTS

In the troubled times after the fall of the Iron Curtain, people needed something new to rebuild their lives. They were even poorer than they are today, moreover they were confused and without an aim. After forty years of socialist patronizing, they were unused to leading their own lives. On this fertile soil charismatic leaders had it easy to attract people to their faith. Today there are hundreds of sects in Russia and the neighboring states. Some are simply regional groups of international sects like the Moon-sect, others are strictly local businesses. Their power varies accordingly with some sects virtually ruling entire cities, while others are happy if they can keep their own temple.

UKRAINE

POPULATION:**.60 MILLION**
 MILITARY:**.417,000**
 LITERACY:**.99%**
 ETHNIC GROUPS:**UKRAINIAN, RUSSIAN,
 JEWISH, AND OTHERS**

—Grigor Afanasyev, "Euro-Trader"

Even after two draughts, one crop-killer virus and overall global weather mess-up, the Ukraine stays the second-greatest food producer in the NeoSov. The black soil for which my land is known is one of the most fertile soils there are. Which is why the Russians have kept occupying it until the 1990s.

No, really, the Ukraine is now an independent nation—NOT! After the Red Army took off, SovOil immediately returned and bought up 30% of all arable land. So, what's better—being governed by Russians or being owned by them? I think the Hungarians did their thing right. You know, resocializing the damned Leviathan.

Ok, you wanna know what my country looks like? Easy, in summer it's a green and pleasant land, in winter you get dry-frozen. Unless of course, you're in the vicinity of Chornobyl. In

that case, you're glowing green year-round. This doesn't pertain to the Krim. They have higher temperatures and less rain, lucky bastards. At least, that's what I've been told, when I was young. Judging from what we have here, they probably have the same queer weather the rest of the world has.

Yeah, the weather sure can piss you off. I mean, if you spend all-year on the road running things to Moldova and back, you'd sure be happy if people hadn't messed up the weather back in the twentieth century. A freak storm can really ruin your day.

It's not your business what "things" I'm running to Tiraspol! Ok, maybe for another pack of those American cigarettes, I might be able to chip you in on the story. Gimme two, and I'll recount the Bible backwards...

Look, the Dnjester-Republic is mainly Ukrainian. It was a simple mistake the Moldavians got it when they split off. Now, they've been trying to return to the Ukraine for the last thirty years. There are some people who have turned to using arms in their fight for freedom. And I know people who want these people to get the equipment they need, you understand? Obviously, you don't. *I'm running guns to loyal patriots, comprende!?* Yes, I will calm down...hand me a cigarette, will you?

No, I don't know who is behind all this. People say, it's the government, others say it's SovOil. I don't really care as long as I get my cash.



BELARUS

POPULATION:14 MILLION
 MILITARY:90,000
 LITERACY RATE:99%
 ETHNIC GROUPS: ...BYELORUSSIAN, RUSSIAN,
 POLISH, UKRAINIAN AND OTHERS

—Vyachaslau Bahdankevich, Parliament member

Politics in Belarus mirror the geographical layout of the country—mainly swampy. Not that I don't like swamps, though. I think swamps are great in a swampy kind of way, you know, all this muck and stuff. They are so different from our concrete city-spaces here. Now look, there is another black-and-white image...

Yes, you asked me about Belarus, friend. Aside from swamps we also have lots of woodland. Woods are also great, but we'll return to that later on. Well, there's two interesting things in politics. First there are those socialist hard-liners. They still have a majority in parliament, even if some of these more active members have been killed in the Nights of Fire. Only thing you can do, I say, is do nothing. That's a very Zen attitude, you know. Anyway, most of them have been

with the party for forty years now and will die of age soon, hopefully.

The second big thing is the ramble about rejoining Russia they've been on about as long as I can think. After establishing the monetary union back in...well, anytime before the turn of the century, people only talked about the grand Reunification. Consensus reality shows us that there was no base for this. Nonetheless, they still keep on talking about it.

What more might I find to say about the Respublika Belarus? Well, most people here work in the fields or they work in one of those ghastly machine factories. Have you seen of those giant eight-wheeled trucks they use to move stuff into the hinterlands of Siberia? They're built here. Friends of mine, they use one to tramp across Russia. They're nice; I think I will introduce them to you next time they're here. In America you'd call them nomads, I think. They earn their living by fixing other people's machinery, or through work in the fields when it's harvesting time. They even went south, to the wastelands there. You know, the area where the fallout from the Chornobyl reactors went down. They had to retrieve some equipment for some government official, they said. Me, I think they just plundered the empty houses. But who cares? Hand me one of those Doktor Hofmann's Jubiläum, ok?

MOLDOVA

POPULATION:4 MILLION
 MILITARY:11,000
 LITERACY RATE:98%
 ETHNIC GROUPS: ...MOLDAVIAN/ROMANIAN,
 UKRAINIAN, RUSSIAN,
 GAGAUZ, JEWISH,
 BULGARIAN

—Aleksandr Sangeli, Euro contributor

Moldova is one little mess of a country. There are seperatists everywhere you care to look. The Dnjester Republic tries to secede to the Ukraine, while Pro-Romanian nationalists want to incorporate Moldova into Romania. It's like, sometimes I think the only reason the country hasn't been disbanded is that people can't even agree on that.

Well, in reality, there are plenty of other reasons for the country's rather distressing state. The seperatists in the Dnjestr-Republic don't have the public support they'd need

for a civil war. The Ukrainians there are happy with the deals they struck with the government. They have the position of a separte republic within Moldova, which is pretty much. They just don't want the fuzz. So the rebels have to be content with growing hemp and smuggling their dope to their Ukrainian supporters. A couple of years back they made a couple of hits on city halls and stuff, but when the militia burnt their plantations, this came to a sudden stop. Lately, I hear they're planning on renewing their "fight for freedom". There's an awful lot of guns going around the DR these days. Could mean trouble for the future, so better stay clear from government installations.

The Romanian nationalists, now they're a bunch of blind idealists. Get real, nobody wants to get incorporated into that rat-hole! Thank Dog, most people here share my view. Otherwise the government would have a serious problem. They can't afford to mess with any of the two neighbors. See, Moldova depends on the Ukraine for basically all energy-related products from coal to raw current. You know, economy here is based on farmers, with all the black soil lying around, that's no wonder. If Moldova were to be blockaded they'd be thrown back to the Middle-Ages. The current situation is bad enough. I hear, even Bucharest doesn't have as many brown-outs as Chisinau.



THE SOUTH

(former Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,
Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)

POPULATION:42.8 MILLION (COMBINED)

MILITARY:92,500 (COMBINED)

LITERACY RATE:VARIES 20-90%

ETHNIC GROUPS:KAZKHS, KIRGIZ,
TURKOMANS, AND OTHERS

—Amalia Mironoff, Local Reporter Solo Of Fortune, Moscow

Since the break-up of the old USSR there has been tension between Russia and Kazkhstan, Uzbekistan and Kirgizia. Those three wanted a kind of union within the union established, which is something the Kreml didn't really like. Epecially since they enjoy good relations with neighboring China (and for some reason the Czech Republic). But these problems were more or less canceled when Orthodox Christs started warring with the Muslims of that area. The Muslims started it by declaring the

Islamic Asiatic Republic, comprised of parts of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Christs felt threatened by this move and started collecting guns. As things go, soon there was a major war between the two factions. When the conflict started moving into the border areas of Russia, the Kreml sent troops and hermetically sealed the area off. As far as I know, people still kill each other down there, even though they fell back economically to the level of a third world country. To spice up the soup, SovOil has a major interest in the area—the Caspian oil fields. To the horror of their military commanders, they were faced with another Afghanistan scenario, meaning badly-equipped tribes on one side and hardcore soldiers with state-of-the-art stuff on the other. And everyone knows how Afghanistan ended, neh?

I should also mention Baikonur here. Baikonur was and is the main Russian space port. Problem is, Baikonur is in Kazakhstan. After prolonging the leasing deal with the remains of the Kazakh government, the Russians parachuted a division of spec ops troops into Baikonur to "secure" the area. To my knowledge, no even remotely-hostile human remained alive. But noone really noticed since the tribal wars in the south haven't made major news for ten years now.

NORTH-WEST AFRICA

(Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia)

POPULATION:55 MILLION (COMBINED)

MILITARY:300,000 (COMBINED; THE
MAJORITY IN MOROCCO/ALGERIA)

LITERACY RATE:VARIES 20-90%

LANGUAGES: . ARABIC, BERBER, FRENCH, SPANISH

ETHNIC GROUPS: . ARABS, BERBERS, CAUCASIANS

—Ali ibn Yusuf, leader of the Islamic Liberation Front,
someplace in Tunis.

BACKGROUND AND CULTURE

For centuries, we have interacted with Europe. Sometimes we dominate them, others they dominated us. Unfortunately now we live one of those, but if Allah so wishes, the situation will change.

Morocco is at the same time the best and the worst. The Hachemite kings are all snakes, but as all snakes they are devious and cunning. They have got all they want from the Europeans just talking, and they even get money for nothing. To think that the heirs of the Prophet would soil themselves so breaks my heart.

True Muslims, those that follow only the word of Koran, are prosecuted, and brazen women show their faces for all to see. You can see almost no difference between Rabat and any infidel city. Only the thought that they are stealing blind those damned EC tourists brings solace to my poor heart.

Once Tunisia was like Morocco, an EC toady and a touristic resort. But they lacked the king, were cheated by the Europeans, bought by them, and letting them do as they wanted. But infidels don't understand Islam, and the harder they hit us the stronger we become. Now most Tunisians have seen the light of Allah, and the Jihad is underway. As soon as Algiers falls, so will do Tunis. And Europe will know fear.

Algeria is where the fight will take place. The Europeans know it, and they send their best soldiers to hunt us. But always return less soldiers than arrived, and many brothers come from the desert to join the Jihad, even from places whose name we cannot pronounce, like Uzbekistan or Kazajstan.

Postmodern Islam

—Professor Abd-el-Ahim, advisor to
His Majesty the King, Rabat.

Islam has traditionally been a tolerant religion. Unlike the other great religions, however, it has become increasingly less tolerant recently. Now the thoughts of the Jihad burn in young people, and they have lost the respect due to their elders. And the sad fact is that they are right, but they will destroy us all.



The fundamentalist movement appeared as a reaction to western pride, that made them believe that they could control us and impose us their customs. While some accepted them, there was an undercurrent movement to return to Koran as the fundamental truth. Unfortunately there are so many interpretations of the truth of Koran as there are sages studying the Koran. And everybody knows where did this drive us: self-destruction, in that catastrophe called the Meltdown.

Now that same fever menaces the survivors, and it looks like Europe encourages it. They support the secular government, but not strongly enough or expertly enough to defuse the fundamentalist powderkeg. Because violence is not the solution to fundamentalism. Equality, self-pride and independence is.

Morocco is still free because their people are proud, love their king and know their neighbours. And they don't want to be like any of them.

TIMELINE

1997: The Meltdown. Libya disappears in a radioactive cloud, partly of its own making. Although they were not primary targets, Tunisia and Algeria take some near hits. The Islamic Movements are shattered.

2000: The Wasting Plague expands through the continent, halving the population of the area and solving indirectly many of the area troubles stemming from overpopulation.

2001: Hassan II of Morocco dies of the wasting plague after visiting the affected in a Rabat hospital. His son Muhammad takes power and keeps his father policy of closing ties with Europe.

2003: Following the Moroccan example Tunisia enters in the EC influence sphere.

2005: Algeria is forced by its neighbours and the EC to become another EC satellite. The strong fundamentalist party opposes the move, and there is an increase in terrorist violence.

2006: In Europe, "risk" tourism is in. The chosen areas are Morocco and Tunis, not Algeria where the real risk is.

2010: The Algerian government folds under the EC pressure to allow corporate paramilitary teams to combat the rebels. While providing real combat training for the troops, the media coverage of this skirmishes is incredibly popular in Europe, promoting the idea of a dangerous world out there.

2013: The antiguerrilla operations extend to Libya, where the rebels keep their training camps and many sympathizers.

2016: The Voice of the Wastes begins to preach *Jyhad* against the westernized countries (Morocco and Tunis).

2019: Although the fundamentalist movement is crushed in Morocco, where the king is also a religious figure, descended from the Prophet; in Algeria it is stronger than ever, and it's spreading quickly in Tunisia.



The Locals

—Piotr Grigorian, mercenary, Biotechnica, Algiers.

If you ask me, all Arabs are mad. A mad Afghan with 50kg. of dynamite strapped to him, killed my father, and I don't intend to end the same way. I have worked all around the NAF, always security work, and I still don't understand their minds.

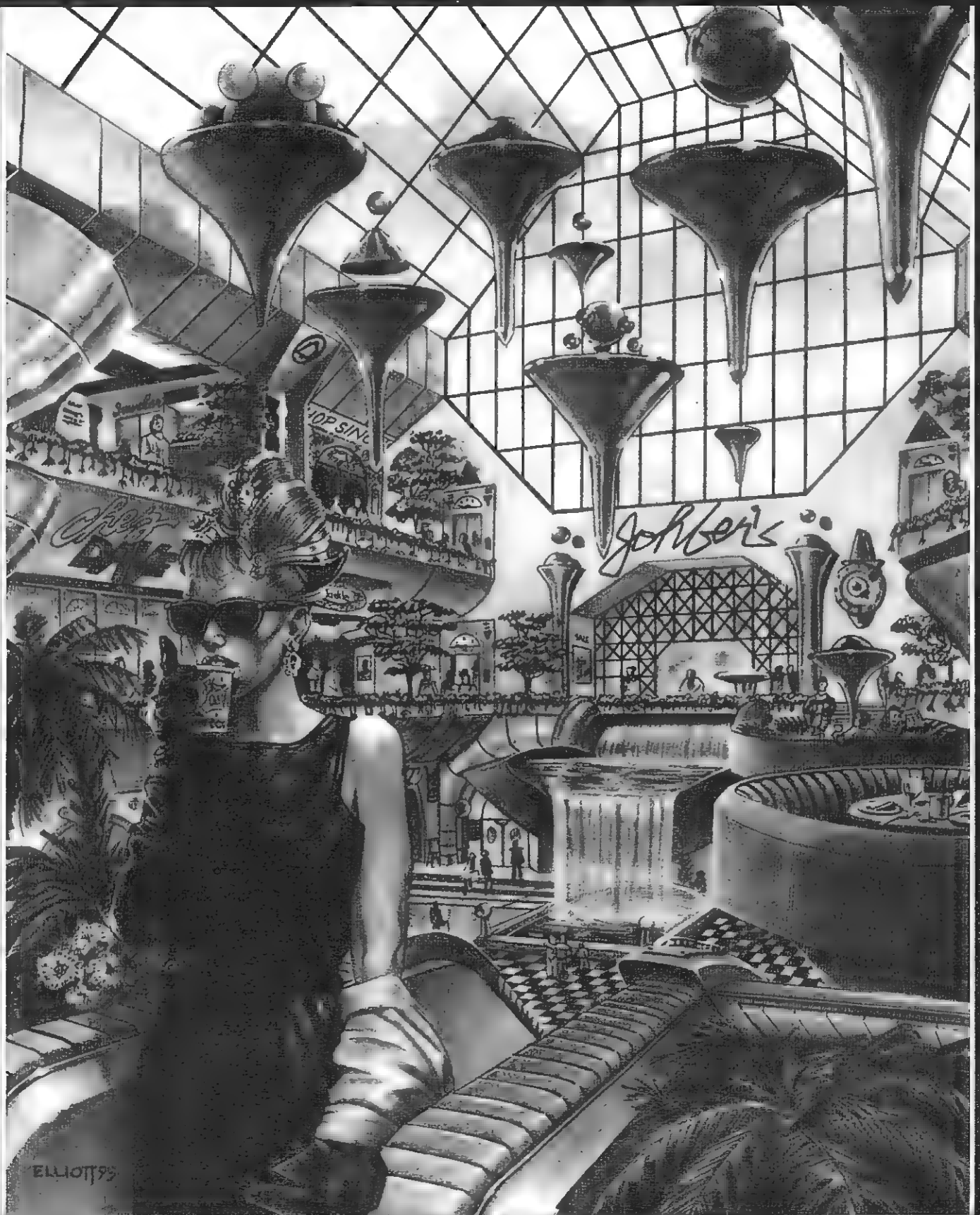
For instance the girls. A few are like girls anywhere else. They like presents, perfume, pretty dresses and a bit of cash. But most will denounce you to their father or husband, and wear the *chador* (veil) voluntarily. Most support the Jihad too, stoning any gal found being friendly with the imperialistic demons.

You can't trust the children either. Most only spy on you, knowing we find it hard to shoot a kid, but many teens will rush you with a grenade, trying to take you with them. There's no rearguard and no civilians, cause any civilians here died a long time ago.

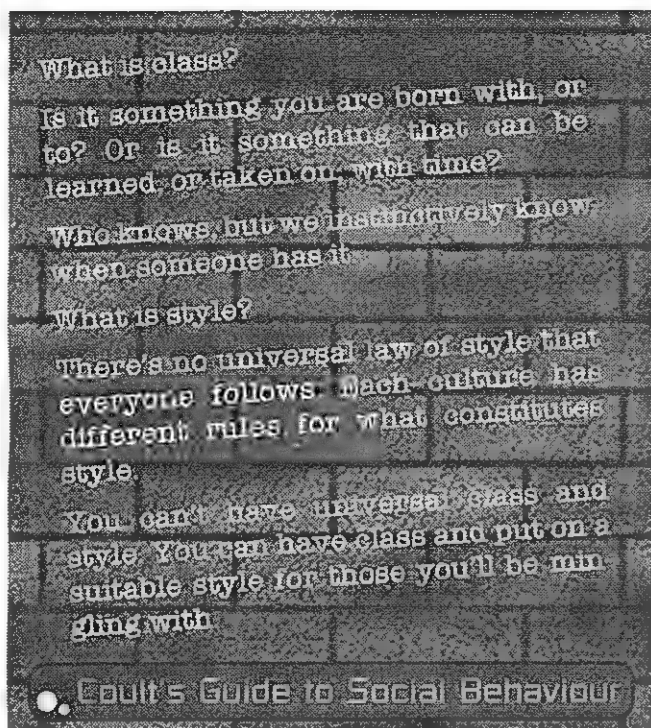
In Tunis, at least they don't knife you just because you are European, if you take care. And believe me, here Yankees are as hated as Euros. There are some heavily protected touristic resorts, where scores of urbanite clones come to have "risky" vacations in NAF. Amazing.

Morocco is like Tunisia ten years ago, but the government has tighter control, so there's some hope for the future. People here smile at you, and it is pleasant to see women faces again, and knowing that people here are after your money, not your head.

CLASS AND EUROSTYLE



ELLIOTT 93



THE CLASS SOCIETY

Europeans take class and style very seriously. Those with class seem to radiate it. It is probably an aspect of self-confidence, the innate knowledge that they are the best, or at least, better than most. In Europe, the right bearing will get you treated with at least some respect everywhere.

On the other hand, style is highly ephemeral. Wearing the wrong clothes in a certain area or with a specific group can be embarrassing, get you into trouble, or even put you at risk. Europeans are all dedicated to their personal style. Only those trying to toady up to their bosses will break from the styles and fashions of their group. This also applies when they travel; they fail to see why they should change their style just to suit some foreigners.

In Europe, class is soooo much more important than style!

THE OLD NOBILITY

Many Europeans still have a lot of inbuilt respect for the nobility of old. Fairytales, legends, and history all teach children that the nobility are somewhat superior to everyone else. Princes, Counts, Barons et al. are still treated differently, more deferentially, in normal life. Most of them have an aura of self-confidence surrounding them. And why not? They can trace their families back for centuries.

Larger hotels always hold a room free in case a member of a noble family pays a visit. Hotels and airlines will always 'boost' nobles to better rooms or seats if they're available. Titled nobles

also enjoy discounts at many upper-class establishments as well as getting invitations to all the 'better' shows and parties.

Even those nobles without their ancestral land are considered special. The old Polish/Eastern German families are treated with great reverence in their homelands, even after Communism tried to equalise everyone. Many have regained their family homes, though most are finding it difficult to reclaim land that was taken from them in the twentieth century.

One distressing trend that's catching on amongst the nobility is the arranged marriage. Nobles from the poorer families are marrying their children to members of the truly rich—the Goldenkids and Eurocrats. It's the best way to get serious money into the family and gives the Goldenkids and Eurocrats something they want, access to titles.

The old nobility and the new nobility are gradually blending into one happy ruling class.

THE GOLDENKIDS

The new rulers of Europe, grand masters of all they survey. Not quite rulers of the Earth (yet), but they're certainly working on it. These guys and gals have a single objective. They want it all. Not now, not even this decade, but they want it and they're sure they're going to get it.

These are the nice, fun-loving girls and boys that control Europe. Nothing important happens without their agreement. Their money buys the governments and the Euro Council, not directly you understand, but through research and advertising. They know who's going to win before election day. They have the power to start wars—both physical and economic. They can get virtually anyone removed from power, either by election, coup, or unfortunate accident.

They play serious games in a league of their own, hidden behind their faceless minions. Great complex plans are hatched and acted on, all in the name of the gods Money and Power. They totally ignore any anger or trouble their actions cause. Why should they care what others think of them or their actions? Normal people can't hurt them.

This doesn't mean they're invulnerable. The Goldenkids are continually at war with one another. It's an underground war with the Goldens in control and their underlings doing the fighting. The Goldens involved are quite often very close personal friends, their business problems don't interfere with their personal relationships. Occasionally, some Goldens will have a personal falling out, but this doesn't change their business aims; they're too professional for that.

The losers lose their power and some prestige. They usually don't lose their money, just their companies. They are still treated like the rest of the Goldens. Some even gain prestige. When Erich Kessler took control of Juan Farbe's development group it was Farbe whose prestige rose, purely for being able to hold off Kessler for so long.





All this, and yet the people of Europe (and many outside) appear to love them. At the very least they respect them. (How can you fail to respect this sheer power?) People look up to them as the ultimate in achievement. They have the power that many dream of...

Is it any wonder they don't want to share their power with anyone? Theirs is a closed shop and they like it that way.

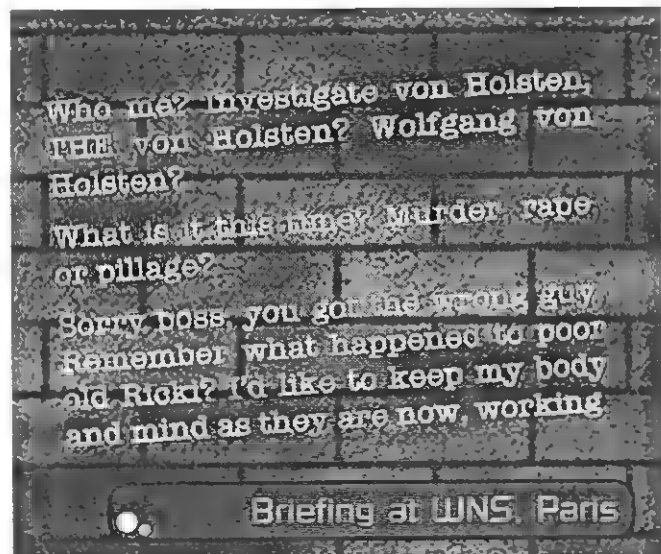
How Did They Start?

In the early days of the European Community each country had multiple companies competing in the same field. Many were supported by their own governments either through subsidies, loans, or simply by government patronage.

The institution of EC fair business rules changed this situation. At first, many companies and countries fought against the rules both openly and under the table. Gradually, pressure brought them in line (like Europe refusing to award contracts to companies that weren't trading openly). Competition for the same markets caused mergers. It's often so much easier to buy out the opposition than fight a trade war with them.

The first companies to go were the old state consortia, such as weapons. Demand for military hardware and heavy-duty armaments was dropping fast. By the end of the twentieth century there were only three corporations manufacturing arms in the EC, though they still used the old company names.

As time went on, big multinational megacorps (such as IEC) were formed in Europe. These corporations gave their senior staff huge amounts of power. Most of these powerful people came from families that were already well-connected in business and politics. They came from a group that was used to wielding power. They became the first of the Goldenkids.



Did you know that Royal Enfield Ordnance, Heckler & Koch, Beretta, and Rhinemetal are all part of the same group? There's a megacorporation out there with twice the armaments production of Militech and Arasaka combined, and the general public knows nothing about it.

Now for your research project for this year. Find out who controls this group and what its assets are.

I'll be surprised if you can get enough info together to prove it. Just be careful, this is sensitive stuff.

—Investigative Reporting

Their Life

The Goldenkids are a lot like bored, spoiled kids. They are always jumping from one fad to the next, never sure what they want, always searching for something new to hold their attention. Yeah, they've got corporations to manage, but that doesn't take too much time. They can get by on two or three workdays a week, most of which can be done wherever they are at the time. Only once or twice a month do they actually have to go into work, usually for a meeting with a non-European of equal level to themselves.

They do a lot of their work behind the scenes. Unlike many others with their sort of power they don't like to flaunt it. They do flaunt their cash, but they prefer not to let others know much about them, their holdings, or their activities. It's a big help to their PR when the public doesn't know exactly who to blame for the latest ecological disaster. Instead, some local flunky takes the flack, then gets early retirement with a cosy package so they'll stay quiet.

They're like those early jetsetters you see on old vids, only those guys were trainees compared to this lot. They move around all the time, and tend to settle in a place only 'till they've drained it of all its novelty value. This month's coolest place is next month's nowhere.

Goldenkids do have seasons of a kind. In winter, they do the winter sports scene, always with a visit to San Moritz. In spring, they're out in the countryside, often visiting more than one coun-

try per month. In summer, they do the watersports and boating scene. In autumn, they separate into small groups and do 'the family thing'.

None of them ever misses the Cannes festival; the best time to play "my yacht's bigger or more opulent than your yacht." Most are in France for the new wine festivals and in Germany for the beer fests. They go to all the big fashion shows, regardless of where they are. Christmas is always spent at home after some serious shopping in Berlin, Milan, Paris and London.

Their biggest problem in life is finding excitement. They feel they've done everything that's going, so they're always on the look out for something new they can sink their teeth into for a couple of weeks. Even when they do find something they like, they get bored pretty quickly. Every reasonably interesting new fad that comes along gets their attention. Like the Romans at the end of their empire, there is never enough to keep them happy, even parties and orgies get boring eventually.

No matter how bored they may be, the public thinks they're wonderful (at least the media do) and follow their every public move. If the Goldenkids start playing chess, there'll be a shortage of chess sets in a week. If they start one of their regular splurges in Virtual Reality, there'll be a run on home VR kits. The Goldenkids are THE trend-setters in Europe; anything they do is a guaranteed fad for a while. Of course, the Goldenkids and corporations realise this and use it for their own benefit. Got a surplus of anything? Make sure you get seen with one, they'll sell fast.

They want it they get it, no matter how illegal or immoral. Goldenkids have the money, power, and connections to arrange anything they want and avoid any repercussions. They also have large personal staffs dedicated to fulfilling their every wish and desire. These personal aides have the full resources of their masters at their beck and call. Rumours constantly abound of Goldenkids involved in murder, rape and many other crimes, yet none have ever been convicted. The closest anyone ever gets to pinning anything on one of the Goldenkids is when one of their aides gets caught. Somehow there's never any evidence to implicate the master as the one giving the orders.

The Goldenkids don't seem to have much of a problem with ageing either. They just don't seem to show their age the same way the rest of us do. Chances are, they've all had genetic modifications to slow the effects of natural ageing. They've probably got a whole lot of nanotech in them to keep them healthy and sprightly. Are they immortal? We'll just have to wait and see. Certainly none of them look to be dying of old age in the near future.

Goldenchildren

Goldenchildren are the children of the Goldenkids. These kids are brought up with anything and everything available to them. Bodyguards accompany them from birth and they are protected from all kinds of risk. They go to school (when they're not learning at home with a tutor or twelve) in chauffeured limousines.

Secondary school is more a social event than learning. They attend one of the top schools or academies, where they are surrounded by the people they'll be working (and competing) with in later life. These little millionaires get the chance to study how people work, how to get what they want from them, and to practise the sort of tricks they'll need to pull regularly in the future.

University is automatic for these kids, no matter what their academic ability. Hey, if necessary, daddy can always build a new university; though normally, large donations will do the trick.

Once they've finished with schooling, they take a year or two off before tying themselves down to the humdrum of having to do something. This time off is where most of them find themselves a spouse (if one hasn't already been selected for them) and decide where to settle down. It's a frantic year of parties, trips, and more parties.

THE EUROCRATS

Another major European power group, the Eurocrats are, in theory, public servants. Their functions as the senior members of the various European Commissions are vital to Europe's future, so only the best people are picked for the jobs. You wish.

These guys are chosen by the Goldenkids as well as the other Eurocrats. The Euro Council thinks it does the actual choosing; they approve every secretariat appointment; they also get to select the Commissioners. This doesn't mean they have the power they think they have. Their options are carefully selected for them by the Secretariat and their votes are carefully controlled by their sponsors, the Goldenkids.

Secretariat members, especially the commissioners, come from the same social grouping as the nobles and the Goldenkids. They went to the same exclusive schools and universities, frequent the same clubs and resorts, etc. Their sponsors probably feel they're picking the right people for the job. As far as they can tell, they are, but it's from a carefully limited selection of options. Their rationale probably goes something like this: what would be the point of appointing someone who just wouldn't get on with the others?

The Secretariat play in the same games as the Goldenkids. They will usually side with their sponsors in any debate that directly affects them, but they also have their own plans. They play a balancing act between keeping the Goldenkids happy, and trying to build up their own power base.

Eurocrats have a unique kind of power. They can affect the choices made by the Council in very subtle ways. Simply removing reports they don't want the councillors to see will usually divert the Council's decision along the track they want it to go. The Secretariat advises the councillors; it would be a stupid councillor who risked her career by ignoring that advice.

OTHER PROMINENT GROUPS

Sport Fans

These are more than your basic unemployed types. Soccer fans and supporters of the other big games tend to have incomes. You need cash, lots of cash, to go to games.

Most fans are just supporters of a favourite team. Many will support teams in different sports. The more fanatical will only follow one sport, feeling that they are the true fans, and the rest just hangers on.

To the serious fans their chosen sport is the most important thing in life. It is all of their social scene, and the fan scene often becomes their profession. Many are thwarted players who wanted to play, but just couldn't make the grade.

Hooligans

A large, violent subset of the fans. To most people, these are the worst fanatics of the sporting world. The reality is very different. These groups are well organised with leaders, lieutenants, and battle plans. They often run training camps to make sure everyone's up to the fight ahead. They're not really fans. They're combat gangs with regional or nationalistic backgrounds. It matters little to these guys who wins the game, who wins the fight afterwards is more important.

Many are fairly well-off financially. Face it, it costs a lot of money for travel, tickets and the right wargear. They wear all the usual fan paraphernalia: shirts, scarves, hats, etc. They also have their weapons and armour. In core Europe, they are very well-armed, usually carrying plastic firearms that don't show up on scanners and storing their heavy weapons outside the stadium for later. In the fringe countries firearms are very rare, most often the fights come down to one large, single melee with a few handweapons involved.

There are deaths at every major sporting event in Europe. You can take out extra insurance cover if you attend games.

Androgynes

Androgynes have voluntarily become sexually neutral through surgical and chemical means. They have no functional sexual organs, usually having them totally removed. To androgynes sexuality is the most dangerous factor in society, promoting strong emotions that cannot be controlled by the brain. The aim is to promote clarity of thought and emotions by removing sexual bias from their lives. They also dress in as neutral a way possible to reduce the chances of them causing sexual thoughts in others.

Rumour has it that many multinationals now have androgynes in vital positions. Goldenkids have been seen with androgynes on their personal staffs. They are probably thought to be less corruptible than other people.





WORKING WITH ANDROGYNES

When talking about androgynes there are special personal pronouns you ought to use. These are the English terms:

| INSTEAD OF | USE |
|------------|-----|
| he or she | sie |
| his or her | hir |

Do not use 'it' or 'its' whatever you do. Implying they are things and not people is a serious insult.

Goths

Black-clad with pale-to-white skin and silver accessories, Goths resemble the baddies in cheap horror B-movies. Originally they were nonconformists rebelling against their upbringing. After a while they became a trend of their own, one of the standards in life. Goths are likely to be artistic, as for years artists have been attracted to the gothic movement. As a group Goths are less violent than most. They are more likely to be mellowing out to this week's hottest recreational drug than getting into fights.

Vlads

The Vlads are more extreme. They believe they are vampires, or at least vampiric. They truly believe that vampirism is the next natural evolutionary step for humanity.

They form self-supporting communal societies in virtually every major city. Their communities are highly structured. Each has a leader known as a count. Under the count are his henchmen, the dukes, and below them the knights. They are easily identifiable by their eyes: red for the count, blue for the dukes, and yellow for the knights.

All Vlads wear the traditional movie vampire gear of robes and/or cloaks. They are all enhanced: vatgrown canines are a must, along with night vision (usually low light), enhanced hearing range and modified voiceboxes. The hearing and voicebox changes permit them to speak at a higher pitch than the normal human range, what they call 'bat talk'. They even live off 'blood', a specially formulated red protein drink.

You can always tell when you're in a city's Vladtown. None of the buildings have windows, but all have added buttresses and gargoyles. By day Vladtowns are very quiet, to be expected when the residents only wake up at night. Many common people are superstitiously scared of Vlads and want to kill them. You don't see many loners.

The New Templars

Reliving the middle ages wherever possible, New Templar chapters are springing up all over. Members dress, talk, and act like as much as possible like people in the medieval period. Joining the Templars is not a spare-time thing, rather a way of life.

They are often encouraged by local authorities as they add 'local colour' and attract tourists. Some towns have even had suburbs designed and built to recreate the town during the period. Stepping into them is like going through a time warp. Vehicles, other than horse-drawn, are not permitted in these suburbs. Twice a year the Templars gather to meet, chat, and challenge each other to duels. Non members are not invited to their meets.

Music Fans

From Folk and Country to Death Thrash and Chromatics, each group has its own style. They have dress codes to identify them, unique body language and vocal keywords to keep impostors out (and make newbies feel out of it). Most often they will assume the style of a favourite artist.

There can be fights when rival groups meet—such fights can spread as groups with similar musical tastes help each other out. Less common, but more deadly, are planned raids on another groups territory. Usually these are raids on clubs that specialise in one type of music.

Surprise Parties

Another French invention that's quickly spreading round Europe. The idea is to hold a party in a public or private building or area, without permission. The more important the building and the larger the party the higher it will be rated.

The biggest hit so far was when 3,000 revellers made their way through the Paris sewers into the Parc des Princes stadium. The party went on for seven hours before anyone realised it was an unauthorised party and not a rock concert. It made the headlines throughout Europe and embarrassed Paris' officials for weeks.

Rumours abound that there will be simultaneous events at all of Arasaka's European offices sometime in 2021.

Stay-Ins

There's a lot of people terrified to go out after dark, these people are in an even worse state. Stay ins are people who are just too scared to leave home, ever. They get everything delivered and really don't interact well with others. Some do manage to get work, though they'll only accept jobs they can do from home.

If possible, these people are housed in special blocks which cater to their problem. Most goods are ordered through the vid, picked up from the warehouse downstairs (if in stock) and then sent automatically to the flat. Bigger blocks and newer developments have autofactories downstairs to get goods made to order.

THE STYLE

Europe's overwhelming style message is "subtlety over brute force." Don't use anything more than necessary if you can avoid it. This applies to everything from make-up to weapons. Discretion and subtlety are the keywords that most apply to





vival in Europe. No matter what you're doing you've got to keep it under control.

Don't wear body armour on a trip to do some shopping, it makes you look weak and scared. It's almost as bad as going to a riot without your armour. Just 'cause you're expecting a fight is no reason to go 'round lugging an assault rifle. The message you're giving is lack of faith in your ability, a dependence on hardware to make up for your incompetence. Now, if you're going 'borg hunting that's different, but if you're not...

It's the same with going off to do some repairs. He who shows up with a massive toolkit looks downright stupid next to her that comes in with the right tools in a small bag. And racing down to the local shops in a three litre muscle car is just outright vulgar.

Once you have a rep for lack of style, it'll take years to clear it.

CYBERSTYLE

—By Gabriel Gaboriau, Euro-Vogue.

Europeans have a very deeply rooted dislike of overt cyberware. Possibly it's a subconscious fear brought on by too many bad violence vids and a few well-advertised cases of cyberpsychosis. Outside the few combat zones and the heavy gang areas you will rarely see any cyberware. That doesn't mean there is none, just that it's usually well hidden.

There are some people who have the status or reputation to survive the slur of having visible cyberware. These are usually media celebrities, trend-setters, and, of course, the Goldenkids and their cronies. Realskinn coverings are standard on European cyberlimbs, you pay extra for anything else, and it probably has to be shipped in specially. Optics are fairly common, but not OptiShields, they're a little too crass and blatant. Interface plugs are always discreetly placed, usually with Realskinn covers to disguise them further.

Walking down the street with cables hanging out of you is a big no-no. Much better to lose time if you get surprised than to look permanently scared. Even better to know what's going on and not be surprised though. Another reason not to walk around with cables hanging out is wiring, the fun game of skaters, they grab them as they go by.

Nanotech

Europeans use Nanotechnology more than cybernetics. Nanosurgeons are considered a much better purchase than implanted drugs. Skinweave (if not apparent, no 'incredible rubber man' impressions, please) is preferred to subdermal armour.

Bioengineering

Bioengineering, (or biotech) is in very common use in Europe. It's been in use for almost all this decade, though no-one else seems all that interested yet. The technology is hard to find outside the European sphere, they are very protective of it. Scandinavia is very keen on bioengineering, they feel it's got great possibilities for the future.

In theory, all biotech does is modify your body for a while for a specific effect. Its biggest advantage is that no-one can tell you're using it without a full blood test. Its biggest disadvantage is that it's very expensive. This is not the sort of thing you can do in the garage with your home chemistry set. It requires a full laboratory set-up and thousands of euro worth of equipment and chemicals.

Biotech can change your body's metabolism. In a big way. It can raise your raw abilities to superhuman levels. Just be careful, it's going to cost you big time. Undergoing a metabolic rate increase not only costs a large amount of euro, but it takes a lot of dedication in time and food to support it.

The vain can also use biotech to improve their looks. A short course of bio tabs can make your skin clearer, your hair smoother, your teeth cleaner, eyes glisten, and even remove bad breath and body odour. This is a definite bioengineering best seller.

Biotech enhancements are not simply a case of taking the tabs. They require a lot of medical care and checks to make sure they're not destroying the patient's body. Most biotech centres will suggest at least a fortnight in hospital after the course.

Biotech is possibly the reason why the Europeans were so officially against Cyberware. It's likely they were trying to hold off on cyberware, knowing that biotech was on the way. If so it was a very wise decision. Cyberware plays merry hell with biotech; must be something to do with all that electricity.

BIOTECH PROCEDURE

COST

Required for all biotech:

Preparatory DNA mapping2700 eb

Retroviral Physiology Tailoring:

Permanent REF increase (max +1)5000 eb

Permanent BOD increase (per point, max +2) ...3400 eb

Permanent ATT increase (per point, max +3)1600 eb

Permanent MA increase (per point, max +4)2700 eb

Customized Biological Adaptations:

Reduced oxygen demand (can breathe smog) ..5900 eb

UV resistance (no sunscreen needed)7600 eb

Toughened skin (SP6 soft armor)8300 eb

BIOTECH PROCEDURE

COST

Designer Bioenhancement Tabs (once/day):

Endurance (ignore fatigue effects for 12 hrs)1200 eb

Ignore Pain (+4 to Stun Saves for 12 hrs)1800 eb

Anti-Trauma (+2 to Death Saves for 12 hrs)4000 eb

Neurochemical Memory Tabs (once/day):

Skill at +1 (lasts for 3 hours)600 eb

Skill at +2 (lasts for 3 hours)1800 eb

Skill at +3 (lasts for 3 hours)5000 eb

Important Note: If the character receiving Biotech has more than 10 HC of non-nano cyberwear, the cost of Biotech is doubled, as is the time taken for tests.



Biotech increases the abilities of corporate operatives; pop a tablet and boost your physical parameters. Pop another and get a whole new skill. In theory, the technology is available to make permanent mindset changes.

Rumour has it that biotech is one of the reasons Eurosols, especially the Angels, are so good.

NATIONALISM

Not all Europeans are good Europeans. In fact most are fairly sure they really don't think this EC thing is working right, at least not for them. It costs too much and no-one's sure what they get out of it.

Europeans have deeply rooted national feelings. They all 'know' their home country is the best in the EC, if not the world, and that the EEC is dependant on them for its existence. No matter how much the children are taught that European unity is the most important thing for the stability of the planet, by the time they're in their teens, they know otherwise.

At some time all these countries have been at war with one another. These animosities have been kept alive through the years by word of mouth. These aren't things you can legislate against. Nothing the EC tries seems to do the trick. The one piece of PR the EC just can't get right is convincing their own citizens they're doing a good job...what a pity.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Life for the more 'normal' folk in Europe is very different from that of those at the top. For most people life's a constant struggle for meaning in an endless sea of boredom.

Those without employment have an even worse time. Sure, the state provides housing (though families are often split into separate barracks), clothing (usually recycled), basic food (and it is basic), and vid (propaganda), but there's nothing else for them.

The European region can be divided into broad regions. Core Europe is France, Germany, and the Low Countries (Benelux). Eire/Ireland, Iberia, Italy, Greece, Turkey and Great Britain are the fringes. Around these are Scandinavia, New Central Europe, the Neo-SSR, and North Africa.

Living conditions within European countries can be roughly divided into three types of area:

Most urban areas follow the standard city and/or conurb formula. Over 90% of Europe's population live in urban areas. European cities tend to be very densely populated. Land costs in developed areas of Europe are very high and this has determined the housing patterns. In all but the richest suburbs housing is very densely packed. Except in the most exclusive suburbs very few residences are single story. Many housing suburbs have blocks of flats scattered between the houses, and there are many suburbs consisting purely of apartment blocks.

Natural (or preserved) areas are areas that have kept their twentieth century (or earlier) appearance, often enforced by law. Preservation orders can be placed on an area either by local government or the EC itself. In most countries these tend to be merely small villages or parts of larger towns. In Germany and Scandinavia, though, they've gone one better and protected regions: whole towns with their surrounding villages, fields and countryside are legally protected from change.

Exploited areas are huge areas of devastation. Land that has been used for strip mining, agri-corp developments, waste disposal, etc. As the need for land for housing increases more and more of these areas are being used for 'New, Out of Town, Residential Developments'. Reports showing sickness levels thirty per cent above average in these areas are considered to be purely subversive.

Even the lowest paid of workers can afford a better lifestyle than most in the rest of the world. Real food is fairly cheap so most workers can afford real vegetables daily and real meat at least weekly (emphasising the difference between those that work and those that depend on the state).

Europe has a thing about nostalgia and wanting things the way they used to be. There are still many who clearly remember the days when everyone ate fresh food daily. Those that don't, get to see what life was like 'in the good old days' in old twentieth century vid shows, many of which are repeated regularly. There's a growing movement in Europe to bring things back to the way they should be: the golden years of last century.

Public transport is fairly efficient throughout most of Europe though some countries are having to relearn the concept after the twentieth century car culture. Most people prefer to live close to their work in order to reduce travel time. This can be a problem when spouses work in different areas. Most employers are flexible on this, though, and adjust the working hours of those living further away to make it easier for them to get to work on time.

Corporations have less power in Europe than elsewhere. EC directives are set in stone and they don't let anyone ignore them, especially foreigners. Most of the EC directives that apply to corporations are highly practical, involving either work practices to enhance safety or financial rules and regulations. Of course there is 'occasionally' a little bias towards European corporations that 'need' to get something done with a little 'extra competitive edge'.

This doesn't mean corporations don't have teeth in Europe. Much the opposite, it's just that they have to work that bit quieter. All corporations working in Europe keep fairly large security teams. They also have experienced teams of undercover operatives available for instant use. Corporations are



An yes, we dream of the past. We dream of life in the twentieth century. Back when humanity felt free to do as it wanted.

Back when we screwed up the planet.

Of course this is what everyone wants. We'd all prefer it was us that had fun screwing things up and not our parents.

Joachim Krüger, Berlin July 2020

required to work within the law, or at least close enough to it that the police or, even worse, Interpol, don't feel the need for serious investigation.

The sheer size and power of the EC council can be overwhelming. Many people feel that they have no control, everything's arranged for them. Things they used to do routinely are now illegal or frowned on whilst new compulsory things have come in. OK, so it's usually for the best. Each ruling has a specific reason for its existence, but the overall effect is oppressive.

Big brother is here and the people can feel it.

DON'T FORGET YOUR ID

Never, repeat never, leave home without your ID card. If you don't have it on you when asked to prove your ID you're in big trouble. You'll get a minimum of a 500 eb fine as well as a guaranteed jail sentence if there's any trouble in the area. If you leave it at home someone might steal it. That there piece of chipped plastic's a valuable commodity to more than just you. Visitors on PACs will be in even more trouble if they lose them, they're out of Europe for sure.

On the less serious side if you lose your ID you're going to end up with one of the nasty new ones. They've got basically the same blue-green swirly pattern, but it's been changed a bit. The semi-hypnotic swirl in the upper right corner has been replaced with a blur that's a lot less amusing. They also carry a better class of hologram, OK if you like yourself in ultra detail I suppose.

European IDs contain much more than just who you are. It's a smart card with your ancestry (if known), medical record, details of all licences and permits, lists of where you've lived and what cars you've owned, and lots, lots more. It also has sample signatures, digitised photos, finger and voice prints for identification verification. If you're very rich (you know, one of those millionaire types everyone thinks Europe's full of) or a convicted

The Dreaded Car Cultists

'Car culture' is a derogatory term harking back to one of the supposed causes of the current ecological problems.

Even though all vehicles are now required to have little or no dangerous emissions people thought to be overusing a personal vehicle are often accused of being car cultists.

criminal it will also have retina prints and DNA matching data.

You can't go anywhere or do anything in Europe without your ID. You need it for voting and transport tickets, home shopping and hotel rooms, jobs and cash, checkpoints and rentals, hospitals and pharmacies. Anytime someone may need to know who you are it's time for your ID.

SAFE FROM THE ELEMENTS

Many of Europe's cities are under threat from the elements. Rising seas and water tables threaten many cities, towns, and coastlines. Acid rain eats away at buildings old and new. Ozone depletion has given a new meaning to the concept of a 'healthy tan'.

In some ways Europe has been lucky. They had practice saving Venice. OK, so they didn't do so well, but they learnt a lot. Walled towns are springing up like it's the middle ages once more. Little city states trying to protect themselves from the outside world. Other cities go for domes, the long forecast solution to environmental and ecological problems.

Along with the problems in the cities there are problems in the country, too. Entire populations are moving as shifting climatic patterns change. Peoples whose entire lifestyles depend on a single crop are moving to stay where it is cultivable. As it gets difficult to know what weather to expect, so it gets difficult to predict what crops will succeed. More and more of Europe is being cultivated under controlled conditions, huge greenhouses, hydroponics, vat food.

REPORTER MISSING

Jarkko Valkonen has gone missing while in Kansas researching a story.

Information received by this office led us to believe that Petrochem was using dangerous chemicals at some of its soya processing plants. Jarkko, who has visited the US many times, decided to investigate further.

A deep research team has been despatched to find more information.

-Finnish Public Broadcasting, 13 Aug 2017

FOOD PLANT EXPLODES

The food processing plant Jarkko Valkonen was researching when he mysteriously disappeared exploded yesterday.

The plant, which wasn't manned, exploded in a giant fireball that was visible in Topeka, some 60 Km away.

Initial investigations have implied that chemicals used in processing exploded spontaneously. Food supplies to the mid US will be reduced for the near future.

-Finnish Public Broadcasting, 16 Aug 2017

THE TECHNOLOGY GAP

Visitors to Europe often remark on how things they take for granted back home are not yet available in Europe. Even the most basic of items seem to be a model or two behind those current in Japan or the US. There are many reasons for this seemingly odd state of affairs.

Europeans have their feet firmly in the past. They like the idea of following the old ways and often look for ways to recreate the past. Anachronisms abound from the hand written letters sent between members of the aristocracy to the use of human waiters and cleaners in all but a few hotels and restaurants.

The EC council passed a directive back in 1998 making the manufacturer of any item responsible for any damages caused accidentally by its normal use. After a couple of very expensive law suits corporations became wary of releasing new goods in Europe. These days it's unusual to find something for sale in Europe that hasn't been in use elsewhere, safely, for at least two years.

Rumours are rife that European (and other) corporations mass field test their latest products in the rest of the world before releasing the final versions in Europe. Other rumours suggest that European corporations sometimes purposely export untested products to undermine foreign countries. One thing's for sure you'll rarely find anything without the Euro Safety approval stamp on it, and that stamp can take forever to go through.

The end result is a six month to a year technology gap between the EEC nations and the other technologically advanced countries. On the other hand Europeans feel very safe with technology and rarely feel it may fail them.

There are also very few major technological accidents in Europe. The technology commission works very closely with the interior commission defining safety regulations and is very strict on imposing them, even on the most powerful megacorps. The

safety regulations are not so strictly enforced in NCE or the other fringe countries, which probably at least partly explains the current mass migration of megacorps away from core Europe.

LEARNING THE BASICS

Education in the EEC is a marvel of inequality. All kids between the ages of five and sixteen must attend school unless they can successfully complete the Basic School Certificate (BSC) exam. Some kids are educated to the BSC level by the age of ten. Most of the rest barely make it by sixteen. Quite a few don't ever make it. Intelligence is usually less of a factor than money.

The majority of the population go to state schools where they are taught the basics as cheaply as possible. Pupils are crammed into classes of at least thirty and spoon-fed information. Compulsory subjects are their home language, maths, basic science, computer studies, and a foreign European language. If they're lucky the teacher keeps enough control so some of it sinks in, often that's not the case and they struggle on through. In theory they are taken through a career guidance plan to ensure they study the right subjects. Often their career plans are biased by their social status and the economic situation of the school's area. Most come out of school with a feeling of relief at surviving it.

Of course, the quality of schooling is heavily modified by the country and the area within it. The quality of schooling available is largely dependant on the amount of cash a country can afford to invest in the future. In the core European countries the educational quality is much higher than that in the fringes. Smaller classes, more qualified teachers, better equipment and far better career planning. Classes in fringe countries tend to be closer to fifty than thirty, and poor school equipment doesn't help. Scandinavia has phenomenal schooling levels. Classes are kept below thirty by law and a higher percentage makes it to higher education than anywhere else in the world.

FOOD SHORTAGE EXPECTED

Food deliveries from Petrochem have been halted for the foreseeable future.

Petrochem has taken this decision voluntarily while it explores the cause of the accident in Topeka a couple of days ago. Supplies are expected to return to normal once they've gone over their procedures.

Experts from the EEC food commission are assisting Petrochem with their investigation.

-Finnish Public Broadcasting, 16 Aug 2017





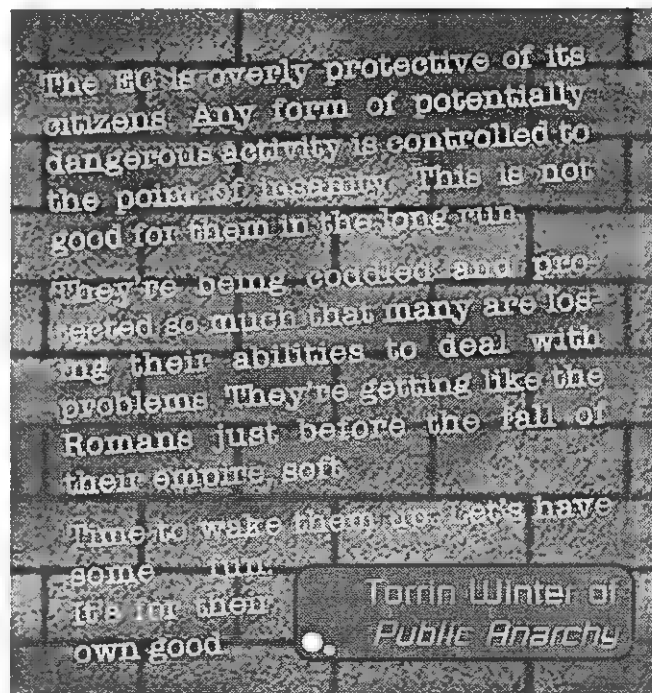
The rich elite go to private schools, with special attention and personal tutors. They are groomed for leadership. By the time they're finished they've acquired both an education and the bearing and attitudes that will stand them well in their expected future lives as the leaders of Europe.

Advanced education is provided by the state for those that make the requirements. After the BSC comes the Advanced School Certificate, usually taken at around eighteen. ASCs greatly increase the chance of getting a decent job, there are thousands of people out there with BSCs, but far fewer with ASCs. Good results in the ASCs entitle the scholar to go to university or technological college with the opportunity of getting a degree or diploma. In Europe people with degrees are only half as likely to be unemployed than those without.

Degrees are very important in Europe, especially degrees from the 'right' university. There are very few managers in either the European Commissions or European corporations without at least one degree. Getting into the best universities requires more than just ability. Universities like Berlin, the Sorbonne, Oxford, and Cambridge only take students from the right families, the right corporations, or with the right connections. Making yourself famous (or infamous) in advance never hurts either.

For those wanting to progress in the military or security a course at Sandhurst or St. Cyr is essential. For the present, it is

very difficult for a non-Brit to get a place at Sandhurst, members of royalty or the nobility will not be accepted.



ENTERTAINMENT

Television (a.k.a. "Vid")

To most of Europe's citizens there's only one form of entertainment, vid. It's easy, always there when you want it, and it's cheap. What more could you want? OK, so it's generally very bland. It's pretty much always aimed at the lowest common denominator. Simple entertainment for those who don't want to get involved with reality. Much is Europap, designed to make the audience feel good about life, especially their life in Europe. A lot is tailored by psych engineers to get the perfect response - content citizens who won't think of rocking the boat. Others go for more direct results, subtly building up hatred and dislike for this week's favourite target.

There are thousands of channels in Europe, most of them the same mindless drivel. Each country has at least two national channels as well as many independents. There's a lot of bandwidth on those fibre optic cables they use for the net, they can handle thousands of channels at a time. Almost all channels can be picked up in every country so you don't have to do without your daily fix of 'Jan en zijn Maats' just because you're on a trip to Turkey. Most of the better channels are pay channels that you either pay to subscribe to or pay as you view.

On top of all the legal channels there's always the pirates, looking for that bit of free bandwidth that'll get them into everyone's homes and, hopefully, hearts. Pirate stations crop up all the time. It's a popular European hobby to play station hopping every couple of hours just to see who's up and running. These guys don't charge for access. Anyone with a vid unit can pick them up. All they want is an audience who might pay attention to their message. If it's honesty you want, the pirate stations are the ones to give it to you. They're not always right, but they usually say what they think.

Directive 2017 - EC - A - 001021 made it compulsory for all citizens to be provided with a communications port. A keyboard and screen for use with e-mail are also compulsory. In many countries the installation of a data port includes a basic vid unit as well, and since January 2018 it's been impossible to get a port and screen kit without a vid unit. This has meant that the EEC is supplying all its citizens with free vid.

Many countries have jumped on this opportunity to saturate their citizens with propaganda on the charge-free channels. This allows them to target a very specific audience, all the unemployed who can't afford better. The same unemployed who are generally the most troublesome. Is it any wonder the free channels show so much boring, happy to be alive, lovey-dovey stuff? They want to reduce violence, not increase it. What they don't seem to realise is that free vid also gives their unemployed citizens access to the pirate channels, the most subversive channels of them all. Yup, the EEC's paying to undermine itself. Ain't that just great planning?

During the 30's rumours flew regarding government use of electronic bugs and phone tapping.

In recent months I have received disturbing news from trustworthy sources that vid sets may have more to them than you think.

Zeppé, everywhere
but nowhere

Live Acts

Not all Europe's entertainment comes down a line. There are live acts a plenty out there. Walk through the centre of any city, especially the major ones, the capitals for half an hour. Count how many street performers you see. If it's less than ten you should get out of the corporate malls more.

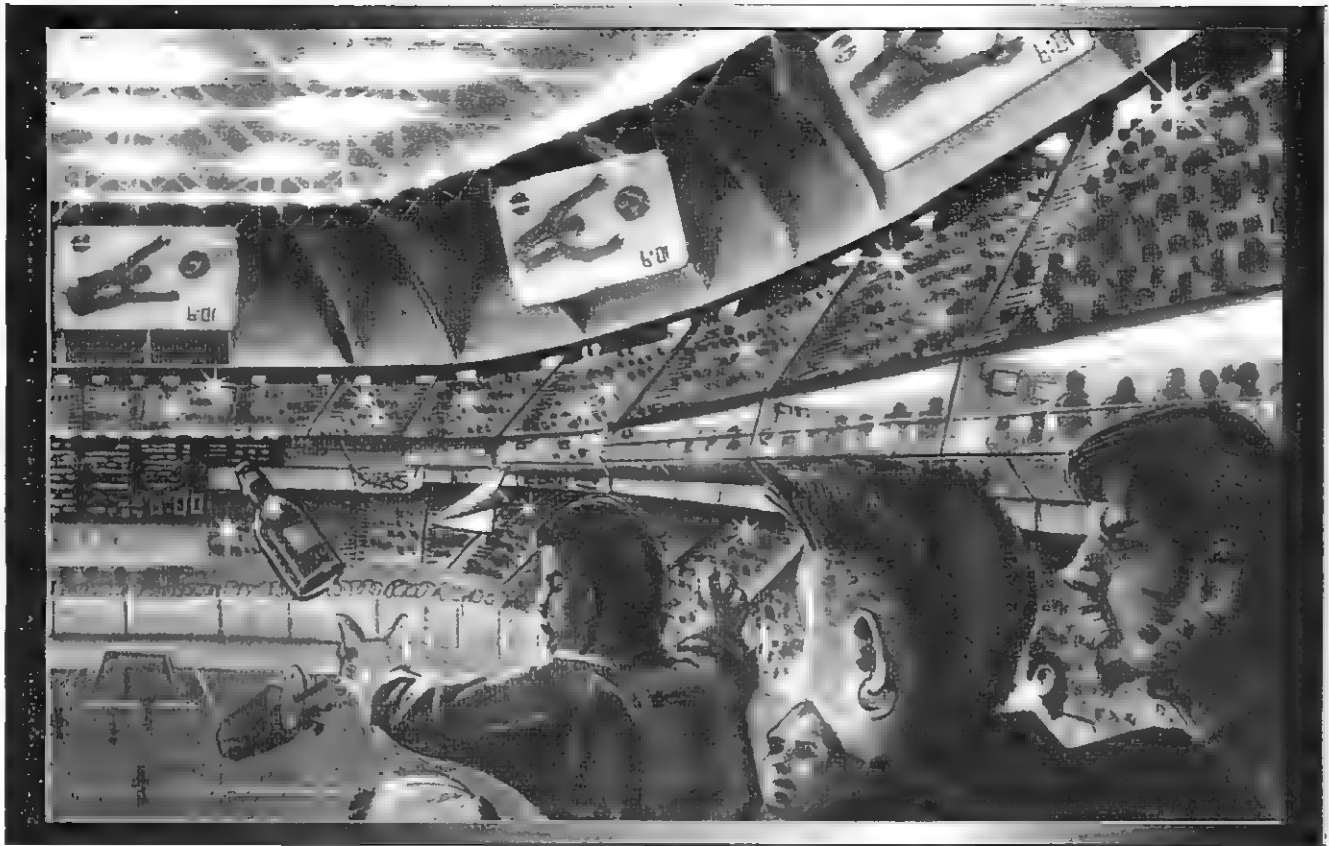
There are singers, instrumentalists, painters, bands, jugglers, mimes, street actors, poets. You name it you'll find it on your average city street. OK, so many are more enthusiastic than qualified, but that just adds to the atmosphere, the raw entertainment of it all. The knowledge that at any moment you could be raided by the 'entertainment squad', city cops who check busking permits, or worse the real cops who may decide it's an illegal (and dangerous) gathering, just adds spice to the situation. Get out there, support your local semi-professionals. Make them feel they're not just wasting their time.

At a slightly higher level there's the club acts. Almost every bar has a live act at least once a week. Night-clubs always have a live act, usually resident for a couple of months if they're worth keeping. A lot of these guys don't quite follow the EC's guidelines on disruptive material. You need to check in advance if the act you're going to see regularly causes bar fights, if so check your insurance.

And finally, for those with more cash than they know what to do with, there are the shows. Opera can be found in every major city (with seat prices starting at two hundred euro and heading steeply up). Musicals, dramas, plays are all available every night of the week in every city in Europe. Some are good, many are bad, but it's an experience the old vid tube just can't prepare you for.

It's entertainment. It's got a raw energy you don't get from censored Europap. Try a live show. You never know—you just might like it. If not you're dead to life, that is...





Sports

Europe is filled with sports supporters. From the thousands who daily take part in amateur and professional sports to the millions of fans, almost everyone in Europe is interested in at least one sport. To most sport is just something that's part of their everyday lives. To others it's an obsession, something that defines who they are.

There are simply hundreds of European sports. Many are national or regional variations on a theme, others are international in scope. Everyone knows the big favourites: Soccer, Rugby, track and field Athletics, Skiing, Skating, Tennis, Karate, Hockey (field, indoor, and ice), Basketball, etc., etc. So which ones get on the Euro vid? All of them, though split into regional shows.

Sports are a great way of relaxing and letting off steam. You can bet the Euro council know that too. Why else do you think they put money into sports centres, encourage sponsorship, and advertise even the smallest of events on the local vid service? Yup, people that are nice and tired from doing their sporting thing aren't likely to rise up against the nice folks that helped them play.

It's even better for them when things get to the international arena and (with a little bit of subtle prompting) all the good cits of Europe are supporting the Europeans against the rest. It's not so good (from the council's point of view) when it's Europeans v Europeans—not good for togetherness at all.

Then there's the bloodsports. Boxing, Combat Soccer, Wrestling (none of this staged stuff in Europe), full-contact Martial Arts. These 'sports' get an awfully large share of the vid's attention. Didja ever hear of bread and circuses?

Extreme Sports

Dangerous sports are growing in popularity—avalanche surfing, dam chute riding, building climbing, rapids skiing, etc. Sports with an inherent risk are growing in popularity. Adrenaline junkies, bored with the safe European lifestyle, are continually looking for new highs.

Of course, the media didn't take long to take up the opportunity for low cost, high action shows. The official channels tend to emphasise the dangers of these sports, but the others show them as glorious displays of bravery in the face of danger.

Hobbies

Hobbies are currently seen by the Euro council as a great way for people to relax and let off a bit of competitive steam. Anything that will keep the citizens happily at home instead of out on the streets has got to be good for public order. They also take over the hobbyists lives, so they are less likely to be upset with any social changes that don't affect their hobby...



They are being pushed on almost all the government and Europe-controlled media. Every day there'll be a filler showing the good points of a hobby or two. Collecting type hobbies are shown emphasising the investment opportunities. Competitive games are shown emphasising the chance to learn new skills as well as the opportunity to win, something most can't do in normal life. Those hobbies with some form of creative input are seen for the possibility of branching off in a new career.

Of course, the corporations haven't been slow to see this market opportunity. All the big media corporations and some of the technology focussed corporations now own a hobby subsidiary. It's great, they don't even have to pay for half the advertising, and the profit margins are huge.

The benefits to the governments are huge, so much so that all the core nations now have official councils for the support of hobbies. Next year the EC is even expected to start handing out funds to formal organisations for the promotion of hobbies.

Pets

The Europeans still love their pets. Cats, dogs, hamsters, fish, snakes, etc. pets of all kinds remain popular no matter how expensive it gets to keep them. Even in the most poverty stricken of areas gangs still have their mascot pets from the mongrels of the kiddy gangs to the fighting dogs of the combat gangs.

To many people they form a stabilising influence, something that depends on them and in many case will show affection. To the rich they are status symbols, breeds and pedigrees are the common subjects of discussion.

Be careful when dealing with animals. The penalties for hurting an animal are usually far stricter than those for hurting humans.

RELIGION

People need something to believe in and Europeans are no exception. There are sects of all the world's major religions in every city.

To many in Europe religion is just another form of entertainment. They pay their cash and then someone tells them how great they are, how bad they are, how sinful their neighbours are, or whatever's the storyline of the day.

To many more, religion is an important part of their lives. The majority of Europeans are theoretically Christian. Although the divide between Catholic and Protestant has closed a lot since the 2014 reforms, there is still enough difference for the traditional enmity to continue.

Judaism has lost a lot of its traditional strength in Europe since the Meltdown. Huge numbers of Jews have moved to Israel to help try and rebuild it.

Islam is on a bit of a roll within Europe at the moment. The majority of immigrants to Europe come from the Moslem nations of North Africa. Also a lot of Christians are moving to Islam. Many of them see the church as getting to weak, too willing to give in to liberal views just to make people feel welcome.

The old European pagan Earth worship religions have gained a lot of popularity over the past twenty years with the growth of ecological awareness. In the twentieth century they were considered to be little more than kooky fringe religions. Now they are mainstream once more in many countries.

Charismatic religion has never been overly popular in Europe. Most Europeans are just too cynical. As stress builds up in Europe charismatic leaders (both Christian and Islam) are beginning to become popular. They are seen by most as being the lunatic fringe, the dangerous, fanatic side of religion.

Generally the religions all mix together with no problems, but occasionally tensions build up and fighting can break out. The main cause is social conditions. The unemployed can easily fall under the spell of someone who points out a scapegoat. At other times it can be a fanatic, with an agenda all his own, who starts the trouble. When religions clash it can devastate an area. These problems are virtually impossible to remove once they have come to a head. The European Internal Commission spends a lot of effort monitoring for racial tensions and then attempting to defuse them before violence erupts.

Nothing gets more airtime these days than the constant conflict between Christian and Muslim extremists. It's been bad for years, but it seems to be constantly getting worse. The main flashpoints are along the Mediterranean coasts, the areas with the largest Muslim populations as well as the most illegal immigrants.

What does not get as much airtime, is how often the religions work to help people against corporations and government. It's not unusual for differing religions to work together and support each other against what is seen as being financial tyranny.

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

Development of the new chemical pre-processing plant in Marseilles was halted today. Petrochem spokeswoman Angelique Defoe stated that it was because of changing economic trends.

Observers think it was more likely because of the arrival of several known Jesuit and Islamic Jihad enforcement squads in the area. There has been a major outcry from both Catholic and Islamic churches over the development that included two churches and a mosque in its planned area.

What was highly noticeable was that the enforcers were not only working together, but also chatting like they'd worked together before.

-Politiken Kommentar, 02 Feb. 2017





Religion is still big money in Europe, though it's a lot less of a money spinner than in previous centuries. The EC has got on to it and now audits religious accounts, any money that's not being used for basic needs or 'charitable acts' get taxed.

New Earth Religions

Ecology groups are effectively becoming religions. A few of them have links to the pagan Earth Mother religions, but most have a scientific base. They are becoming faiths with their own tenets: thou shall not eat meat, thou shall not use fossil fuels, thou shall not permit the building of roads, etc.

The only problem between groups is they have different basic rules they try to follow. If they could only agree, they might become a power group even the Council would have to pay attention to. As it is, they spend far too much of their time arguing between themselves.

The 'affirmative action' groups are the Crusaders of these new religions. They risk death for the cause.

ECONOMICS & INCOME

Cash is even more of a rarity in Europe than the rest of the planet. Cred chips are also uncommon.

Most people have a debit account. It's similar to a credit account, but you can't spend what you haven't got. Your debit card only holds info leading to your account. The reader itself checks your current balance when you use the card to pay for something and authorises the transaction if you have enough for the bill.

Credit cards are available, but you pay a premium as the banks prefer their customers to use debit accounts.

THE INDEPENDENT WAY OF LIFE

As everywhere else lifestyle is totally dependant on income. Nowhere else is the gap between the have's and the have-not's so blatant. There are a lot of have-nots.

Unemployed

Although the government provides the basics in life for citizens it only provides the real basics: food, clothing, a roof over their head, and access to a data port, usually they also get access to vid. They then have to make do with what they can scrounge or find to improve their lives. All they have is their food and vid. Is it strange that so many of them turn to crime or commit suicide?

According to the EC directives it's illegal for families to be broken up for state accommodation. In practice, families often get the choice between staying together in a box at the local landfill site or going to separate barracks where they can live in good conditions. What choice is there?

In many countries it is becoming common practice for towns to 'request' a little manual labour from those claiming the right to their basics. At first this use caused a major uproar, but it has

since settled down to a part of life. Those claiming their rights can be asked to perform three hours non-dangerous work per day at a rate of 2 eb per hour. Any work over the three hour limit is paid for at 10 eb per hour. Ridiculously low rates, but they allow towns to get things done they couldn't otherwise afford and give those doing the work a little (very little) cash of their own.

The EC guarantees 'necessary' medical care. Have you seen some of the tricks they pull on those that can't pay? Operations are performed by students, wounds are sutured by porters (then again some of those porters are better than the real doctors), limb transplants come from donors of totally different race to the patient. It's like they're trying to penalise them for daring to be poor.

All these things conspire to make the unemployed even more unemployable. They're creating a caste of untouchables, allowed to live—but nothing more. Is it any wonder there's unrest in every country and regular attacks on EC property?

Employed

Those with good (or even moderate) jobs can afford to live in totally different conditions. The minimum hourly wage in the EEC is 6eb per hour, anything but the most basic of manual labour earns over 10eb per hour. It is easy to live when you are earning over a 1,000 euro a month. Maybe not well, but you can live in comfort.

Where would you live? Depends on the country to some extent. In urban areas most people live in flats. Only the rich and those living in the suburbs or smaller towns have houses. But what constitutes rich? In France and Germany only those pulling in a couple of grand a week can afford a house in an urban area. In Spain, Italy or the UK all but the unemployed and menial workers can afford a house if that's what they'd prefer.

For a slightly lower cost than a house you can get a maisonette. Maisonettes (or Town Houses) are small blocks where each apartment is the same size as a normal house. Similar in many ways to the American condos, the difference is that these homes are rarely considered to be luxurious. Most just offer cheaper living than houses as they use less land per unit.

Then there's the terrace, an unusual beastie that's common in the UK and many urban areas. A terrace is a row of between three and ten (rarely more) houses that are joined by their side walls. Each house still has its own garden in front and behind, but they are cheaper than stand alone houses. Another example of Europeans using less of their valuable land for housing.

Even if you do find a house you can afford don't expect to get much of a garden. Unless you're buried in cash and living in an executive zone your garden will be a small affair, barely big enough for a couple of people to lie down in.

A very common European practice, for the rich, is to have two homes. A nice 'little' flat in the city for workdays as well as a larger house in the country for the rest of the family and for weekends and holidays. Country homes tend to be in small communities of large houses in the middle of the countryside.



Medical coverage is cheap—the EC made it essential for countries to provide free medical attention to those that couldn't afford it. Because of this governments provide subsidies to medical care providers from local doctors up to specialist hospitals. Those that can afford it are expected to contribute towards their care which is where medical insurance cover comes in very useful.

Trauma services are available to those that pay for them. Without a trauma card you better hope you can get a phone call through. Trauma cards are available from many suppliers, all of which compete to pick up trauma patients. It's not unusual for a Trauma Team customer to be picked up by REO Meatwagon when she breaks her card.

The various trauma services have an agreement where they pay other suppliers that pick up their customers. Naturally it's cheaper for them to pick up their own customers than to be cross-charged by a competitor so there is a lot of competition to have the right coverage in the right areas.

An unusual feature in Europe is the SOSBooth. This is a nearly indestructible armoured box (SP 40, SDP 120) with a 2m cubed space in it, enough for 4 to 6 people. To open a cube simply slap the big, white, hand-shaped button next to the door and the door will whisk open. To close the door again insert your trauma card (if you have one), debit or credit card into the slot on the wall. If you have enough cash or credit available (automatic for valid trauma cards) the door will slam closed. At the same time the vid-screen on the wall puts you in contact with the local despatcher who will arrange police (or private security) and/or medical attention. If you do not have a valid card in the slot within ten seconds the door will close and the box will flood with anaesthetic gas. Eventually the police will come along to see what's happening.

TOWER STRESS

A new, and very disturbing, trend in European cities is 'Tower Stress'. It's violent, and it can strike anywhere. Residential tower blocks exploding in a violent frenzy.

There are thousands of people now who rarely, if ever, leave their apartment blocks. Everything is provided where they are, so there's no need to leave.

But there are times when things go wrong. Lights blow, neighbours get too noisy, the vid gets fuzzy, that sort of thing. After a while, tension builds up, people start to get angry with each other, cliques form.

Unless something gets done, it all falls apart. Once-friendly homes become prisons. People begin to hate each other (and/or the authorities) and anything can happen.

The usual result is fighting inside the block with up to forty per cent of the population participating. Police specialists are so far unsure about what to do to prevent tower stress, but one thing's for sure—it's spreading.

It's been suggested by the Interior Commission that no new buildings exceed five floors in height. Maybe this'll help.

DIRECTIVE 2016 - EC - A - 001823

From the 1st Jan 2017 all member states shall provide medical attention to EC citizens and residents should they need it.

Medical attention shall be everything necessary, and possible, to return the patient to a normal, healthy lifestyle.

Any medical institution that fails to provide care for those in need shall be prosecuted.

WORKING FOR THE MAN

So what do you get for selling out to the big organisations?

If you're a good corporate or government employee, where you stay is often decided for you. All that money they give you doesn't (quite) buy your soul, but it sure buys your body. Senior personnel do tend to get some choice of location and style. Corporations in Europe always provide housing to all but their lowest level employees for a nominal fee (usually 1% of the going rate). They then get charged another 20% of the going rate in tax, the finance commission can tell a taxable perk when it sees one.

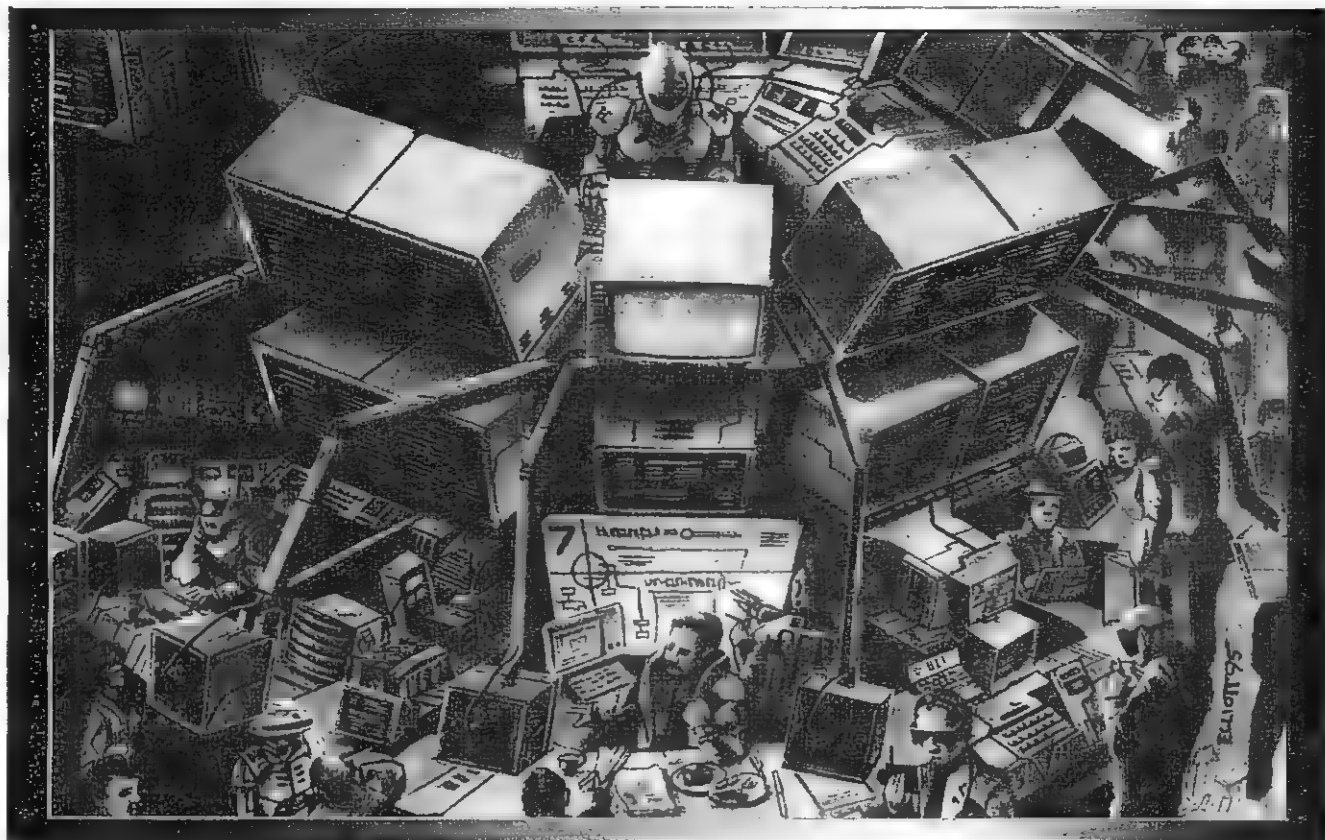
Some corporations, especially the foreign ones, allow their staff to choose where they live and then pay for it. European corporations, especially the larger ones, often build entire villages or even towns for their personnel.

Corporate villages are clean, secure, and very formal. They are kept well clear of other housing by fences, walls and security, and are completely off limits to non-corporate personnel or their guests. Near the middle of each village is the Centre where goods can be bought (with appropriate corporate discounts). There are usually fast food joints and a restaurant as well as pick-up and leave points for rent-a-cars or timeshare cars (see Transport). There will also be teleworking facilities where employees can do extra work, or even their main work if it doesn't involve customers.

Staff housing around the Centre is in an onion-ring style. Within each zone (or ring) of the village the lower quality (& size) residences will be in the middle, with the better outside. The lower ranked personnel are towards the centre, usually in apartment blocks. Around them are the junior executives in their identical little boxes on monotonous streets, still it beats being in a block. Around these are the senior executives in their custom designed houses, usually more like mini mansions or palaces than practical residences. The end result is an orderly flow from large blocks of tiny apartments to massive stand alone houses. Of course, all buildings in corporate villages have computer controlled management systems such as the IEC Domitic (*Chromebook 3*).

Occasionally there's a single huge building on the edge of the village. Usually it's surrounded by acres of land, animals both domestic and wild, and enough security guards to invade a small country. This is the local Chief Executive's house. Entering the security radius around one of these without an invitation is a rather elaborate form of suicide. The police will not bother to investigate.





There are also some old towns that are owned by corporations. These are towns that built up around a corporate site or project, often when it was starting up. As the site grew so did its town till it got to the point where there was a large town totally dedicated to supporting the corporation and its employees. The dependence on and dominance of the corporation has led to many of these becoming corporate towns with all amenities and police provided by the corporation.

...And the Big Man

Most Secretariat personnel also get subsidised housing. At the lower levels it's usually a cheap room in a housing development or arcology owned by the EC. At higher levels they get private houses, often bigger and with even more garden space than those of major corporation executives of an equivalent level.

Often government developments turn into self-contained towns. All the normal amenities are present though at reduced rates. Secretariat personnel don't pay tax or VAT as it just adds complexity to the admin work. Secretariat developments are used for all commissions, they include commissaries where anyone who works for the council can pick up goods at reduced rates.

Secretariat towns are less organised than the corporate villages. Often they have started out as a small development for a single commission office only to have other commission's per-

sonnel moved to the area later. This has led to a hodgepodge between areas of apartment blocks, maisonettes, and houses with offices and shopping areas scattered amongst them. In many ways they're rather similar to normal European towns that often grew like this, though not as quickly.

Many of these older towns grew up around military bases and research centres deliberately placed away from other towns. Many of these old bases were deserted when European armed forces were cut down at the end of the cold war during the late twentieth century. They left behind them desolate buildings that the secretariat took over at minimal cost. Security in these is usually tight, often getting within ten miles requires enough permits to fill a small car.

PAYING THE PIPER

Taxes are a strange matter, different by country and nationality. The EC has come up with a nice, ultra-complex system that guarantees accountants work.

You pay three sets of taxes. Nationality tax (to whichever nationality you're registered as, or the EC if you're not a citizen) and residential tax (depends on where you're currently registered as living) are taken off your income. VAT is then taken off your purchases (at varying rates). Generally income taxes are in the region of 15%, 5% nationality and 10% resi-

dential. Non-citizens are charged 15% nationality tax. Taxes are higher in the core nations than they are in the fringes (and much higher in Scandinavia) though this is evening out as conditions in the fringe countries approach those of the core.

Tax evasion is a popular game in most of Europe. It is, however, not often successful. Tax investigators have full access to any bank accounts they want. Not only that but your bank will automatically send details of your income through to the tax inspectors every year. Trying to pressurise the taxman isn't a good idea. The corporate auditors may have bodyguards, but in many countries the local taxmen carry SMGs.

The only way to avoid paying taxes is to make sure there's no trace of your transactions, no sign of what you're buying or selling and no way of tracing the money to you. Of course this means you must have accounts in different IDs or, much better, in banks outside Europe. Switzerland and Scandinavia are good sources of independent banking advice.

VAT is charged on all purchases. It is, of course, charged at different rates depending on what's bought. The current official

rates are: free for basic necessities, 10% for common basic goods, and 20% for luxury items. VAT is included in the prices of all items bought legally so you don't need to worry about whether you can afford to pay the tax or not.

GOING SHOPPING

There are two exceptionally different ways of doing your shopping in European city centres. There's the luxury way: large, open shops with real live shop assistants. Then there's the cheap way: all automatic and computerised, pick what you want from the on-screen catalogue and hope it's in stock. The different types of shop usually occupy different sections of shopping areas. Even the restaurants and fast food joints are tailored to the type of shopping predominant in that part of town.

On the outskirts and in suburbs you can still find the market stalls and family shops that used to make shopping in Europe such a fun experience. They are gradually being forced out of business by the big chains, but most are still hanging in there as they are in locations bigger chains wouldn't be interested in.

MONTHLY COSTS OF BASICS BY REGION (with modifications for non-urban areas)

| | CORE | FRINGE | SCAND. | NATURAL | EXPLOITED |
|-------------------------|------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|
| 5 bed house rent † | 1500 | 1200 | 2000 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 3 bed house rent † | 1000 | 800 | 1500 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 1 bed house rent † | 400 | 300 | 500 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 5 bed maisonette rent † | 1200 | 900 | 1800 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 3 bed maisonette rent † | 800 | 650 | 1300 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 1 bed maisonette rent † | 300 | 250 | 400 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 3 bed flat rent † | 700 | 500 | 1000 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| 1 bed flat rent † | 250 | 150 | 300 | x 1/2 | x 1/4 |
| Coffin † | 120 | 80 | 180 | x 1/2 | x 1/2 |
| State Housing | free | free | free | NM | NM |
| Power | 120 | 150 | 80 | x 2 | x 1.5 |
| Water | 50 | 20 | 40 | x 1/2 | x 1 |
| Kibble | free | free | free | NM | NM |
| Soya / synth food | 100 | 100 | 80 | x 1 | x 1 |
| Cheap Food | 300 | 300 | 250 | x 2 | x 1 |
| Good Food | 800 | 700 | 600 | x 1 | x 1 |
| Luxury Food | 1500 | 1300 | 1200 | x 1/2 | x 1.5 |
| Motorcycle Permit | 125 | 30 | 150 | x 1 | x 1 |
| Car Permit | 200 | 100 | 350 | x 1 | x 1 |
| Truck Permit | 650 | 280 | 1000 | x 1 | x 1 |
| Cell Phone Service | 60 | 120 | 100 | NM | NM |
| Cred Chip acct. | 70 | 40 | 50 | NM | NM |
| Debit Chip acct. | free | free | 20 | NM | NM |
| Health Cover | 150 | 90 | 180 | NM | NM |
| Trauma Card | 200 | 150 | 250 | NM | NM |

NM = No modifier.

† = Multiply Cost by location Modifier (as below).

Free = Free only to citizens with ID.

Combat Zone x1

Nice Area x3

Moderate Area ... x2

Executive Area x5



Since EC Directive 2009 - EC A 000039 (a.k.a., "the Provision of Rights"), it has been the state's duty to provide the basic needs of all citizens. By defining the basic rights of citizens the EC, in one move, improved the lot of 24 million homeless and destroyed the quality of life of 126 million unemployed who were drawing various unemployment benefits.

Not only did the directive make the EC look good, but it saved the EEC states a whole lot of money. No longer do they have to pay their citizens large amounts of cash to feed and clothe themselves. Instead the citizens have to find their way to the official barracks and soup kitchens. Isn't life in the EEC overflowing with wonder? Are we supposed to consider this progress?

● Free Europe spokesperson

Shopping From Home

The Net has made home shopping really easy. Almost all kinds of legal goods are advertised on the net. For clothes, you can store a pattern of your own body shape to see how they'd look on you.

You just key in your order, pop in your bank card and your ID to verify the transaction and your current address. The goods are put together (with any necessary option changes) at the nearest warehouse with stock, usually your home city, and should get to you within 24 hours. If the goods are not delivered on time you get a discount.

Plug and Use

Modular components for electronics. Buy the modules you want and put 'em together. You can get a new casing every couple of weeks if you want to keep up to date. You can get parts from one company and plug them to parts from another.

There are vending machines for everything from food to electronics. They're especially predominant in arcologies and big offices.

TRANSPORTATION

Europe is home to a constant struggle between the need for transportation (for goods and people) and the need to protect the environment. When you have millions of people crammed into very small areas the effects of pollution can be devastating.

GETTING THERE

Europeans have used public transport for centuries. Many city centres were originally designed to accommodate buses and trams. Most were modified during rebuilding after one of the many wars. All towns and cities have comprehensive bus routes providing transport along the most popular routes. Many city centres also have tram systems running fixed routes. All major cities have mass transport in the form of monorails or subway trains.

Some of the more advanced cities have started installing innovative new transport systems. Oxford, Brussels, and Cologne have installed moving walkways to permit pedestrians to move around quicker without needing vehicles. Frankfurt and Barcelona are using small monorail cabs that work like taxis, on entry you key in your destination and the monocab takes you there. At present these systems are only available in the city centres and between major suburbs. The Interior Commission has recently been getting very interested in these systems for use in many other cities.

All cities have public rent-a-car centres where anyone with a valid driver licence can pick up a car for necessary trips as long as they have the credit.

Many cities also have vehicle timeshare systems. Citizens pay to join the scheme and can then use any vehicle on the scheme for a limited number of hours each month. Vehicles are parked in special bays in the city centre and suburbs.

Cycles (both pedal and assisted) are very common in European cities. They are the traditional mode of transport in northern Europe, and gaining in popularity elsewhere. Many of the more advanced designs use the brakes to build up power that can then be used to assist on hills.

Motorbikes are still popular with many sub-cultures. More than ever they are the symbol of the rebel, and are often used in advertising to signify a free spirit, someone who won't be tied down. They are very unpopular with governments.

Trains are the most popular between cities transport. There are 400kph mag-levs between all major cities and con-urbs. Cost for a standard fare is roughly 1 eb per 10 Km. Flights are available between virtually all cities, costs are usually around 1 eb per 5 Km.

Dirigibles also ply the more common routes. These are so slow that they are used for the luxury they offer rather than their efficiency as transport. You just can't beat travelling in a five star hotel. Dirigible trips cost from 200 eb per flight day.

Getting Your Stuff There

Goods usually travel long distances within Europe on huge robo-haulers. These monstrous trucks are over thirty metres long, five metres wide and at least three metres high at the cab. Their trailers can be up to ten metres high. Armed and armoured they ply the major routes in special, wide lanes at a constant speed of 140 Kph. On the outskirts of cities they pull in to special truck stops. There their goods are transferred to smaller trucks for the rest of the trip. The haulers just pick up their next load and head off out again.

In theory, the robohaulers can detect obstacles in their path and avoid them. Smaller vehicles in trouble often pull onto the robo lane to get out of the traffic. A few incidents where a robo-hauler has smashed into a stationary vehicle rather than drive into lanes of moving traffic pointed out the flaw in that idea.

In and out of continental Europe most goods travel by sea. Valuable or dangerous cargoes as well as others travel by submarine to reduce the risk of interception. Submarines also help with cutting down sea congestion. Larger and less urgent cargoes travel on computerised sail or rotary sail freighters. These usually travel at speeds in the region of fifteen to twenty knots.

The Tunnel at Gibraltar

In May 2016 the EEC council approved directive 2014 - WE - S - 010254, the building of a tunnel between Europe and Northern Africa.

The official reason was safer and easier travel between the continents. The real reason was that it would allow Europe greater control on traffic. The tunnel would also reduce some of the pressure on the Mediterranean patrols. Effectively the directive implied that any vessel crossing between Africa and Spain would be breaking the law and thus be an automatic target.

The route selected was between Gibraltar and Ceuta. This was a very careful choice allowing Europe to solve a couple of outstanding diplomatic problems. The British occupation of Gibraltar had been a sore point with Spain for decades, as had been the Spanish occupation of Ceuta with the Moroccans. The tunnel allowed Europe to take over control of both the Ceuta and Gibraltar regions 'to protect the tunnel and its workers', thus easing the problems related to both.

Work on the tunnel itself started early in 2017 and was completed in 2020. It has a train line and a dual carriage road going each direction. The entire town of Ceuta was turned into a massive transport terminus for the tunnel. All people and goods coming to Europe from Africa have to be processed through Ceuta first, it speeds things up.

Gibraltar was turned into a gigantic waypoint for people and goods heading into Europe from both Africa and across the Atlantic. The port was enlarged to cater for more transatlantic shipping, with a massive increase in its submarine handling capacity. The 'rock' itself was further hollowed out to provide 'secure' storage and accomodation for goods and people

Tunnelling Through

The Eurocouncil likes tunnels. They cost a lot more than bridges, but they last longer and they're a lot harder for terrorists to target. Tunnels also make it easier for the border patrols. If all legal traffic is going through the tunnel, anything trying to cross the border overland is obviously illegal.

Last decade there was a sudden rush by terrorists to blow up bridges, it was almost like some sort of macabre competition. The availability of aerodynes and cheap gyros provided them with the perfect means of delivering powerful explosives to the most sensitive parts of the supports.

The failure of the Liverpool-Ireland tunnel looked, for a while, like it might stop the development of future mega-tunnels. The success of the Rome-Sardinia and the ongoing construction of the Gibraltar-Ceuta tunnels, and the failure of numerous attempts upon them, has inclined planners further towards tunnels.

Tunnels under cities are also becoming more common. By making goods vehicles travel under the city, instead of through it, congestion is reduced dramatically. There's also a marked reduction in the danger of truck bombs and truck-jackings.

heading into Europe. It has grown into a small underground town. It's not unusual for people to arrive unexpectedly without the correct paperwork and have to stay for weeks.

There is a large administrative community to process the vast amount of paperwork required by the port. Most of them live on the island itself in the old British government areas. The rest commute from the Spanish mainland.

The British troops stationed in Gibraltar stayed. The units were transferred to the EDF and their families moved out to join them. Their reputation and experience as some of the best (and most ruthless) border troops around helps prevent trouble.

CHANNEL SHUTTLE FROZEN AGAIN

For the sixth time this year, the Channel shuttle has been forced to halt services as police search for bombs in the tunnel. This stoppage is unusual as it wasn't the usual IRA claim. This time, the claim is from Bretagne Libre, a Brittany independence group. With this stoppage rate, this 'high speed link' is rapidly turning into the slowest transport system in the EEC. Drive-through tunnels were unaffected by the stoppage.

-The Times, 12 Mar 2019





TRANSPORT CONTROL

Motorised vehicles within Europe are taxed by a complex formula involving loaded mass, number of wheels, size, and emission levels. Spot checks are held irregularly. Vehicles that fail are taken away and sold at auction.

Private cars are becoming uncommon as taxes push them out of the affordable range of the average citizen. Those that can afford vehicles usually get them supplied free from the corporate or government pool, though don't think for one moment that corporate pool cars are equal, there are separate cars for different management levels. The concept of the 'company car', where companies would provide their employees with a vehicle as part of their payment package, has been virtually wiped out by taxation.

Private vehicles are also restricted as to where and when they may be used. Most town and city centres have banned private vehicles other than those used by courier services, during standard working hours. Deliveries are done at night when there is less congestion and there are fewer pedestrians around.

It is illegal to manually control any powered vehicle on a major route (freeway, primary flight lane, etc.); you will lose your licence and suffer a fine at the very least. All vehicles used on major routes are required to be fitted with an autopilot that meets EC safety standards. All autopilots must be capable of detecting

obstacles and dangers as well as maintaining a constant speed.

Aircraft and shipping must stick to fixed routes. There's a risk of your actions being 'misunderstood' by the authorities if you veer off your official course. Even in cities, AVs have flight lanes to follow; generally, these follow the traffic directions of the roads below.

Pirates and highwaymen are prevalent throughout Europe. The core countries have less of a problem than the fringes, where road anarchy is prevalent. Pirates operating from semi-submerged islands and disused North Sea oil rigs have raided both ships and coastal areas. It is very difficult to track these raiders as they use very low radar image vessels.

Convoys are common in dangerous areas. Often, in places like the UK or Central Europe, convoy points where people can get together are organised by the government. Convoys are usually escorted, either by the police or army, or by private operatives who charge each vehicle a fixed rate—sort of an unofficial toll. Of course no-one entirely trusts these private operatives, but most people would prefer to pay than take the risk of going it alone.

Politics of Transport

Political forces are pushing for public transport, possibly more powerful forces than the push for a cleaner environment.



Every time someone buys a ticket their ID is logged. This makes it very easy to track people, especially suspected subversives. If people suspected of subversive activities start gathering in one area, then it's also time for a gathering of some of Interpol's 1st Directorate agents.

It also makes it easier to track stolen ID cards. Computers can instantly spot if a specific ID code is making impossible trips, such as taking the mag-lev from Paris to Berlin at the same time as a local trip in Athens.

THE LAW

EEC directives have defined the majority of crimes to make it easier for Europeans to understand each other. Brussels hasn't yet gone so far as to take over lawmaking and penalty definition for the whole of Europe, though it's probably only a matter of time.

What are the penalties? Europe has sentences broken down into standard codes. The code for a specific crime varies by the nation it is committed in. Crimes involving Interpol go onto a separate scale of codes enforced by EEC judges.

Penalties in the UK tend to be far stiffer than elsewhere; the death sentence is relatively common there for those that survive to make it to court. The police in all but the core countries are likely to use deadly force if they even think you are resisting arrest. The chances of this happening increase drastically for those suspected of violent crimes in fringe nations.

Any violent crime involving injury to a victim's organs may result in the attacker having the same organs removed and replaced by cheap implants as part of the compensation package. Any crime can receive a stiffer sentence if the crime appears exceptionally bad. Extenuating sentences can drop a crime's sentence by one or more levels.

The conditions in a prison can vary drastically from country to country. Some are like state-sponsored hotels or guest houses with psychiatric and psychological help on call. Others are more like primitive slave-labor camps or medieval dungeons.

Even the most insignificant crime is likely to get a non-citizen deported, so those of you hoping to come over and work had better be careful. Yes the rumours are true, non-citizens have been deported for speeding, as it proves they're not 'quality citizenship material'.

Core Europe is a low violence area. Europe is a firm subscriber to the concept of 'necessary force'. Killing anyone, except in provable self defence, is going to get you a prison sentence.

They do not appreciate people getting shot. If you must carry a firearm for your own protection make sure you have rubber bullets.

SAMPLE CRIME CODES

| INFRINGEMENT | EEC | CORE | FRINGES | SCAND |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|---------|-------|
| Mass Murder | A | B | A | B |
| Murder | A | B | A | C |
| Manslaughter | D | D | C | D |
| Armed Assault | C | D | B | C |
| Assault | C | D | C | C |
| Endangerment | D | E | C | S |
| Rape | B | B | A | A |
| Sexual Assault | C | C | B | C |
| Kidnap | C | B | A | B |
| Violent Robbery | B | C | B | C |
| Robbery | D | E | D | D |
| Theft | D | F | D | E |
| Breaking and Entry | D | D | C | D |
| Espionage | B | B | A | C |
| Failure to Recycle Properly | D | E | F | D |
| Incitement to Disorder | D | E | C | E |
| Disorder | F | F | D | S |

EEC: Any crime investigated by Interpol.

CORE: Any crime committed in Germany, France, Benelux, Austria.

FRINGES: Any crime committed in other EEC states.

SCAND: Any crime committed in Scandinavian states.

CLASS CODES: A - death or long prison term (15 + years), B - Long prison term (10 - 20 years), C - prison term (5 - 15 years), D - short prison term (1 - 10 years), E - short prison term (1 - 5 years), F - fine or 1 - 6 months, S - social work.

DIRECTIVE 2004 - EC - A - 000135

From the 1st of January, 2005 all European Community citizens held in European Community prisons shall be permitted their basic human rights. Denial of these human rights is a legal infraction carrying a minimum of a two year prison sentence.

European Community criminal prisoners will be accommodated in clean, dry housing and fed nutritionally acceptable food. They shall be permitted to perform acceptable work to earn a salary—any such work shall be performed for the European Community's benefit and not that of a foreign power.

European Community criminal prisoners shall be given at least three hours a day with the opportunity for communal exercise or entertainment. They shall be provided with access to TV. They will be given the chance to exercise their votes.





ORGANISED CRIME

Organised crime in Europe is big business, very big business. From the old time families of the Cosa Nostra (Italy-Sicily), the Union Corse (France), and the Firm (Britain), to the newcomers such as the Yakuza (strongest in Germany), the Triads (strong bases in England and the Netherlands), the South Americans, and the various East European nationalist mafia groups (the Russian Organitskaya are the most prolific) Europe is full of crime groups.

All have some basis in a community, usually one that was at some time repressed. Most still feel they owe a debt to that community and use a lot of their profits to support it. The Yakuza, South Americans, and some of the Mafia groups don't, they're only in it for the money.

In the main, organised crime tends to deal with 'white collar' crime: illegal shipments of goods, gambling houses and clubs are the favourite sources of income for the older, more stable groups. The darker side, prostitution, the skin trade (slavery is not as dead as most think), protection rackets, robbery, and drug dealing tends to be controlled by the newer, younger groups.

Whatever the group, the rules are always the same. Those at the top live lives of luxury on the endeavours of their underlings. They are rarely found guilty of any crime, as

they simply don't take direct part in any. Those at the bottom take the risks for the hope of promotion.

Ever noticed how both of Europe's top security prisons are in the UK?

The EC maintains the Kirk Michael Maximum Security Facility on the Isle of Man (the big island between England and Northern Ireland) for the worst offenders. The UK had to go for the second option and uses the Isle of Wight (next to Portsmouth) for all its prisoners.

Talk about shovelling your dirt under the carpet. Hide it all in the UK's sphere and nobody will know it's there.

Anna Reijker, Dutch Judge

THE ROLES IN EUROPE



THE EDGE OF EUROPE

—Marcus Seifert, "Administration Counselor," Germany

So this is what you wanted to see me for—to tell you how people work and deal with each other in Europe, especially the underground? OK, I can do it, I suppose. You won't find many people with better contacts than me. It's your money, so here goes.

Smooth clothes, fast aerodynes, luxury housing and quality food. Everything done in the best possible taste. That's what foreigners think working in Europe's all about.

It is, for those at the top—and some of the slime that sell out.

For the rest of us it's a long hard daily slog. Everything we do has to take into account the wishes of the Goldenkids and their pals. They play complex games that can take years to evolve and involve hundreds of individual steps or actions. Even the simplest of jobs is likely to involve a wider conspiracy that can trap you in its tentacles before you know what's happening. Any job that doesn't seem to have any logical reason behind it is guaranteed to involve at least one of those bloodless monsters.

You gotta watch out. The big guys play in their own league and don't care about anyone else. To them we are less than nothing. We're not even obstacles. They can remove us from the game any time they want. The worst thing is, every time you do some work for one of them you're also working against at least one other. You annoy him enough and, *voilà*, you cease to exist. Refuse to do the job and, guess what, you may cease to exist.

Is your life worth more to you than success? If so, don't be stupid and try to play the game here. Go somewhere else where your skills can give you a nice, comfy life and everything's nice and simple. Just stay out of Europe. It's not for you. Maybe you'll survive in the fringes, but not here in the middle of it all. Anyway, let's get down to the details. Oh, yeah, don't store my name anywhere. I want to survive a while longer, got it?

SHOWING OFF

There's an old saying: 'the clothes maketh the man'. This is more true in Europe than anywhere else. Groups use clothing to show ability as well as allegiance. It is highly frowned on (and often dangerous) to wear the clothes of a group or league other than your own.

- **ROCKERBOYS** tend to wear the distinctive dress of their chosen audience. It helps the audience feel they have something in common and is one of the most important image decisions a rocker can make. As a rocker grows in popularity there comes a point where they become fashion leaders of their own, with fans copying their dress mode. At this point they tend to branch out a bit, changing their image gradually over a period of time.
- **SOLOS** are typified by their dress. These knights errant tend to wear practical, hard wearing clothes such as Gibson Battlegear. These will often be blatantly armoured. As they improve in stature and cash they get customised combat wear made for them. The

smoothies wear suits, almost invariably of natural fibres, and often will display their school or college tie prominently. If you see a guy in what looks like real tweed with an SAS tie you should be careful, he's only let you see him 'cause it suits him to.

- **NETRUNNERS** are, as usual, pure nonconformists. Starting jockeys tend to wear jeans and T-shirts advertising computer products. As they improve they start to do runs for status symbols: T-shirts for concerts that haven't been held yet, jackets from next month's Paris or Milan releases. You know a 'runner's made it to the top when she's posing in a bar in the same outfit as Councillor de Tours is (almost) wearing on a live vid debate.

- **TECHIES** all start out wearing the same 'uniform', the ubiquitous jump-suits and overalls. At first they will be cheap mass-produced items with hundreds of pockets. Gradually they move on to tailored and luxury (such as silk) versions. When they hit the big league they change to designer suits and carry their tools in a briefcase.

- **MEDTECHIES**, except for those at the top, are usually impossible to tell them apart. They cheat and hide everything under those white coats. Of course the higher the meddie, the less they wear the coats and the more they show off their tailoring. All senior medtechies wear their university tie or badge to identify them to their fellows.

- **COPS** that are uninformed are easy to distinguish. If you couldn't what'd be the point in having them? Not only do they get covered in rank insignia as they progress up the ladder, but they also get better designed and cut clothes. Undercover cops are impossible. One day they're dressed as tramps, with odor to match, the next they're in this week's latest in leisurewear. Possibly because of this it is impossible to categorise off duty cops (other than the really top dogs) by their clothing. Cops seem to have an innate lack of respect for fashions.

- **CORPORATES** are the ultimate in fashion victims. Have you never seen the morning tie scramble when they find out what color tie the boss is wearing today? If not, you should, it's an enlightening experience. Corporates flaunt their position and power through their clothing. To them clothing is often more important than title, it can show someone's relative position regardless of the disparities between the companies involved.

- **FIXERS**, like cops, are like chameleons. They change styles as needed, depending on who they are dealing with. Even their voice, accent and mannerisms change to suit the audience. Only while relaxing can you tell their true status. Fixers are more at home in casual clothing than in anything more formal. They tend to go more for the relaxed styles of Scandinavia than the more stylised look of Italy. It doesn't hurt their business if their clothing implies a close link to Scandinavia.

- **NOMAD** packs each have their own markings or clothing style. The only ways to tell rank are the quality of the clothes and equipment, and the use of tribal markings, if any. Unless you have the time to get to know a nomad pack well you need to pay careful attention to the interaction between the pack members.



SOLOS

There are basically two totally different solo types in Europe. They rarely mingle together, and both look down on the other as not being 'true' solos. There is a great disparity between the street solos (known as thugs or streeties by the others) and the true Eurosolos (the streeties call them smoothies).

Knights Errant

Street solos work their way up from the bottom at the school of hard knocks. They've got to be tough, and they've got to show they're tough. The majority claw their way up from the gutters in zones and gang controlled areas. At first they work from the basic fighting techniques used in their area. They develop their own fighting styles by the 'if I don't get killed, it worked' method. Only much later, when they start earning serious money, can they afford to take real lessons.

The others go through the military or a corporate security squad, where they learn the basics of fighting. Some do it as a planned career move, but the vast majority just go in to earn a few bucks. Maybe they actually see combat before they leave, but usually all they get is a few street patrols against poorly armed citizens. It's only when they leave that most realise they've got themselves a career that'll keep them going. From there it's off to the gyms, ranges, and dojos brushing up and improving on what they've been taught.

These solos are just like those you can find in cities anywhere in the world. They're coarse and brash, pushing their abilities into everyone's face to try and get work. At least in Europe you won't find them wandering around with assault rifles, well at least not in the core countries anyway. As everywhere else, in the combat zones, all bets are off. These guys'll carry all the firepower they need for the job and then some.

Smoothies

Eurosolos are different. Very different. They go to school, real school. Get themselves degrees in all kinds of subject. Only then are they selected for training if they have the right temperament and demeanour. Their training, at least two years in a corporate or government covert operations school, is rigorous and very wide ranging. They learn as much about psychology and culture as the actual mechanics of death dealing.

After their training Eurosolos will be gradually immersed in their work. A little security work here, a few gentle ops as part of a team there, maybe a little time as bodyguard to a moderate level executive. Maybe a few subtle little enhancements. If they show promise they'll get even more training and more enhancements before being sent on to the real work. On their own, or in charge of a team they'll get to try everything from counter-extraction to assassination. If they're very lucky they'll get to spend time with one of the elite, either a Goldenkid or a member of the Cybercircle.

Before they break away from their parent group they'll need to build up a few contacts. A good agent (a fixer or go-between to you US folks) is absolutely essential. Employers aren't going to want to talk direct, they like to do things properly with someone that understands the way they work. They'd better have themselves a good armourer, using off the shelf weaponry just doesn't hack it. A couple of good netrunners won't hurt, who knows when you're being set up or not quite being given the full picture.

Solos that are good enough and build up the right contacts will be able to make it on their own. A few jobs a year and they'll begin to build up a reputation. If they mess up just once that reputation'll bite the dust. Maybe, if they're good enough and survive long enough, they'll be accepted into the Cybercircle. They live life in the fast lane, often mingling with the Goldenkids.

Solo Eurostyle

Other than language, there are a few differences between how you must work in Europe and how you would work elsewhere. These rules only fully apply to core Europe, the civilised nations, anywhere else they should be modified as necessary.

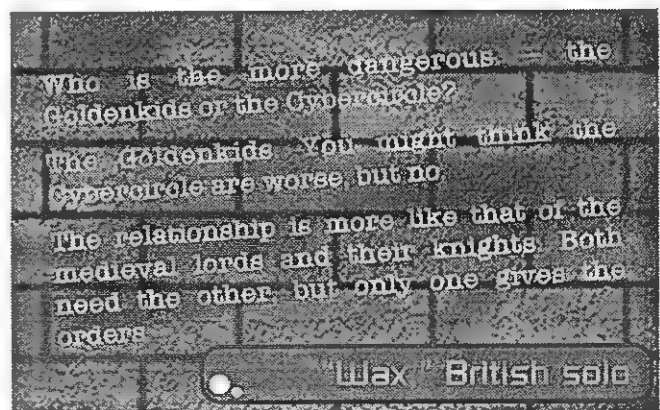
Firstly don't show too much cyber or weaponry. Cyberware isn't too popular in Europe, so they tend to pay excessive attention to those with a lot. Weaponry is seriously unpopular, unless you're a uniformed guard visible weapons will get you arrested so quick you'll get whiplash. Anything heavier than a knife or pistol and they'll call SWAT in.

Secondly, dress well. Unless you absolutely need to dress down as a cover, wear the best you can afford. Oh, and make sure it's suitable for the situation.

Thirdly, show some class. Solos in Europe aren't just killers, they're masters of combat with an old fashioned nobility. Honour is not just a word to these guys, it's a way of life.

Fourthly don't depend on technology. There are going to be times when it's just not available. Try to use your own brain and skill rather than that of your weapon's processors.

Finally, never upset a member of the Cybercircle or, even worse, one of the Angels. There are easier ways to commit suicide.





EUROSOURCE PLUS

THE ROLES IN EUROPE



CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0

DATASCREEN 125



NETRUNNERS

Europe has a well-earned reputation for having really bad 'runners. The situation is beginning to change, gradually (now they're only poor), but the reputation remains. Europe's top runners have always been very good. It's the lower ranks that just didn't rate (and still don't, truth be known). The reason was very simple—Netwatch.

In the Eurotheatre, Netwatch has a phenomenal presence. The Eurotheatre has always been their most heavily protected region. On top of this is Interpol's 3rd Directorate, this mob used to be a joke, but even they've been improving lately. Just to add to the fun, the security levels in the UK, Scandinavia, and Sovspace are very high. One false move and you're toasted. The sum total of all this net policing is a net region where it's very difficult to get away with the simplest unauthorised run.

Because it's so heavily policed many 'runners get caught before they can build up more than the basic skills. Only the best will survive for more than a couple of weeks with their freedom intact. For this reason there's always been a big gap between the abilities of the majority of 'runners and those few that had the abilities and kept 'running.

Things are changing though, the netrunners are getting better all the time. The massive security in the region has led to 'runners having to get more sneaky to get anything done. Before they start doing actual runs many 'runners use Virtual Training to get practice at dodging security. 'Runner societies have sprung up all over Europe to teach newbies more than just the basics before they go out there actually run. There's a new breed out there and they're hotter than ever before.

With the entry level 'runner getting so much better, Netwatch found itself being beaten by Euro 'runners far too often. Interpol's latest idea of recruiting 'runners that've been caught in the act has caused yet another increase in the security level of the Eurotheatre. The circle continues.

ARCHAISMS

A lot of people and businesses use pen and ink, especially for valuable information. Yup, this stuff went out with the twentieth century, but no-ones told Europe yet.

The Goldenkids routinely pass messages between themselves as hand-written notes transferred by courier. About the only exceptions are EBM (of course) and the Euro administrators, both put everything onto their terminals and only pass messages by message-mail.

It's not so easy to do a run against paper info, but think about it. Why do you think they invented the Crystal Ball controller?

VIRTUAL TRAINING

A new way of teaching newbie runners. Virtual Training runs are done in simulated Net regions built specifically for training. Trainees get to do one run per day. Each run lasts till the security beats them. Usually the SimNet is built on a workstation network.

Instructors run on the workstations while the trainee runs the SimNet using his own deck. Normal activity is built into the SimNet program to give the trainee 'runner his target data. The instructors simulate defences and opposing 'runners. They start off weak and increase the security level with each simulated run that lasts longer than a couple of minutes.

Graduates of Virtual Training go out into the real Net knowing what sort of thing to expect. Twice as many Virtual Training graduates survive their first three months on line as those that haven't done the training.

Opportunities

There's a lot of work out there for corporate 'runners, and even more for freelancers. The big corporations are hiring netrunners like nobody's business right now. Anyone who shows any signs of netrunning ability will be hired as soon as they apply.

Not all this recruitment can be explained by the recent improvement of 'runners abilities in the Eurotheatre. Yeah, the corps feel they need a bit more protection. Maybe they need more data protection, but surely not that much. Something big is building up, and I wouldn't be too surprised if they're expecting a war soon...

For the indie 'runners there's a lot of work out there. Contracts are flashing around, especially for runs into the UK and central Europe. There seems to be a lot happening on the fringes, and the opportunities for net work are considerable.

Within the UK, the MLA government has been taking a lot of flack recently. Those poor aristocrats, the peasants are revolting. It's about time. Any 'runner with time on their hands will be more than welcome to join in the games. Just be careful, they play rough over there.

Raids into the good old NeoSSR are taking on a new urgency. Seems that some Euro powers aren't taking the power changes there too well.

A lot of people other than governments and corporations need help from 'runners these days. Pirate vid stations are always on the look out for someone to get their feeds to the people. Rockers need you to put their latest creations out there. Solos are always trying to find out who exactly they are working for. Techies are continuously looking for parts and equipment.

The net is all important within Europe—everyone working outside the rules needs your help.





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THE ROLES IN EUROPE



CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0

DATASCREEN 127



MEDIAS

Medias have the same problems as Rockers when it comes to knowing who to work for. They have the added disadvantage that it's impossible for them to be truly independent. No media can truly go it alone. Even the smallest pirate station needs a crew. A good few reporters are needed to keep the public interested, they're not going to be happy with only one report a day. They also need an editing studio and transmission station at the very least. Yeah, most of the equipment can be loaded onto a truck to keep mobile, but it's still a lot to take care of.

Pirate stations do have one big advantage in Europe though, no need of a great big transmitter or satellite dish. All vid channels go through the net. This just leads to different approach by pirates. Instead of a transmitter that they keep on the move, they need a mobile netrunner, preferably with friends, to protect the feed.

For most medias in Europe the question tends not to be whether or not to sell out, but who is the best to sell out to. There are hundreds of channels ranging from the ultra bland EC controlled 'free stations' through the 'we're better than they are' national stations, and the 'we've got it as long as you can pay for it' commercial stations run by the megacorps.

Many of the official stations scan the pirates looking for talent. They also monitor the public's viewing habits, this is easy as the net vid channels have been set up to indicate who's watching what. Whenever a pirate show catches the public's imagination you can guarantee that there'll be a stampede of 'agents' out to find those responsible and recruit them.

Of course if a show catches the public's attention in the wrong way there'll also be a different stampede of agents looking for those responsible. Only difference is they'll be out to stop the show, for good if necessary.

SCREAMIES

Very popular in Europe, the local screamsheets are fed to everyone's homes through the ubiquitous vid system.

Screamies are the natural home for local news in the EC. Almost everyone checks their local screamie regularly, if only to check for special offers. There's a lot of room for enterprising reporters on the screamies, as they are virtually free of outside influences.

VIRTUAL MAGS

Another great start for the enterprising media is the Virtual Mag. There are hundreds of these available on the Net. Usually they're run by schools and universities. And they're always on the look out for material; the more subversive the better.

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: JEAN TOUVIER

HANDLE: LE GUILLOTINE

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| INT: 6 | REF: 7 | TECH: 5 |
| COOL: 10 | ATTR: 12 | LUCK: 6 |
| MA: 6 | BODY: 7 | EMP: 9/8 |
| AGE: 26 | BTM: -2 | |

SKILLS: *Credibility* +6, Personal Grooming +6, Wardrobe & Style +7, Streetwise +3, Human Perception +5, Interview +8, Social +4, Persuasion +5, Awareness +3, Compose +5, Education +5, Library Search +3, Dance +4, Photo & Film +2

CYBERWARE: Contraceptive Implant; Neuralware Processor (Machine Link); Chipware Socket, Interface Plugs; ATTR-Enhancing Bioware

The current top interviewer on the main French national vid station, Voix Francaise, Jean has risen spectacularly over the past two years.

After getting his degree in Journalism at the Sorbonne, Jean began reporting with the biggest of Paris' screamsheets, *Le Parisien Libéré*. While there, he earned his nickname due to his ability to destroy people's careers with a well-documented exposé. After a series of articles on corruption within the EC Secretariat, he was recruited by Voix Francaise.

Although he has his own show (simply called 'Jean', it runs for 26 weeks each year) he hasn't let the fame go to his head. Jean still does a lot of his own research. Often, he won't even let his production crew know what he's working on until he has a complete story.

Jean does not join in the official Voix Francais line of fanatical Francophilia. In fact, he is rumoured to be doing an article on the French government's connections with Voix Francais executives. His production crew are dreading the upcoming show.

A tragic modern dance mishap claimed several lives today.

Tune in tonight when Lars Utrecht interviews today's hottest brain-dance stars: the Swedish G-Strong Team.

Horrors on the rise. Film at 11:00.

Sound bytes from the evening news.





COPS

Europe, where the cops only carry non-lethal rounds and don't need to wear heavy armour. Where the citizens not only believe in the law, they also respect it. Where armed robbery rarely involves more than a couple of gangers with knives.

Yeah, right. Europe might look like the perfect place to patrol, but it isn't always.

In core Europe (the touristy bits) you can find areas like that. The centres of Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Rome, Dublin and others may be clean, with well-behaved populations, but they're the lucky ones. Cities in the poorer areas have DMZs, angry unemployed populations, and bad public facilities. Riots can build up anywhere (though maybe not so often in those orderly Germanic countries with their populations of sheep instead of people).

You won't see cops in the Mediterranean countries, or in Eastern Europe, walking the beat without heavy armour and high-powered SMGs. You usually won't see them at all. They're inside patrol cars that can trace their ancestry more to APCs than they can to normal vehicles. In the UK, that's considered tame, at least one cop per patrol will have a heavy assault rifle; they'll have even more firepower in the bad areas.

Local cops

All Europe's police forces now follow the same pattern. This wasn't quite forced by the EC, merely suggested as a good idea.

There are regional forces responsible to the local government. These guys are paid from the local budget (no wonder the worst areas tend to also have the worst policing). Regional forces are responsible for small-scale local crime. They can handle robberies, one-off murders, and even small riots, but their powers are limited.

Regional forces generally play an important part in their communities. They show the flag and let the citizens know the police are out there. In villages and smaller towns, the local cop is well-known by everyone. In larger towns and cities the average citizen couldn't hope to meet all the cops, but they can at least get to know their area patrol officers.

Except in the depressed areas it's uncommon for an officer to have to draw a firearm. On average, they get involved in less than five (4.8 if you must know) shooting incidents per year. When they do get into a firefight, accuracy is much more important than firepower; they can't afford to hit bystanders. Generally, regional cops get transferred to the national force if they show a good aptitude for specialised work.

Above the regional forces are the national forces, these are controlled by the national government. They tend to get involved with crimes that cover more than one region, or get a fair amount of media coverage. Organised crime is gener-

ally covered by these guys as is anything involving corporations, though they will often end up calling in Interpol if the case gets too big.

National forces cover the more dangerous cases, for this reason they tend to be a lot more heavily-armed than their regional counterparts. They also get to do all the fun undercover operations. SWAT and forensics are also controlled at the national level, though they usually have regional bases they operate from.

The biggest bugbears of the national forces are organised crime and terrorism. All too often, these cases fall under Interpol's jurisdiction, but the locals have to do all the preliminary footwork ahead of time.

Cops and Interpol

Most normal police dream of getting a job with Interpol. Interpol gets all the glamour; all the really big cases. Any job working with them may lead to a transfer, so most cops working a joint investigation are willing to put in serious hours, something Interpol capitalises on.

Jurisdiction can be a very sensitive issue. Officially, Interpol gets it if it crosses borders or affects Europe as a whole. Unofficially, Interpol gets it if they want it. Very few local or national police departments are going to argue with the big boys in Berlin; they've got the political muscle to destroy the career of any senior officer that crosses them.

Interpol only gets to work on a case that's already being investigated if they get an official request from the local police commander. In many countries this will often require a 'push' from Interpol, as locals don't want interference from outsiders. In countries like the UK and Greece, it can be very hard for Interpol to get involved; those countries have their own agendas and don't want to be pushed around.

Virtually all of Interpol's cases will involve the local police to some extent. Not only does it help to get the local view on a situation, it also means they get some free, enthusiastic help.

Corp Cops

Corporate cops work under different rules in Europe than everywhere else.

For a start, they have to be a little more than the usual security morons they get away with elsewhere. In fact, they have to keep the security and policing arms totally separate. The actual police will not work with security, they will only work with corporate police, and even then, they need to feel sure these guys have the right training.

In theory, the corporate cops are only there to help the local cops with crimes falling within corporate jurisdiction. Corporate jurisdiction includes crimes on corporate property (of course), as well as crimes that target corporate assets.



In the corporate villages jurisdiction is easy. The corporation provides the entire local police force and they're supposed to work with the national police on cases that cross jurisdictions. Normally they do work well together—though it's probably to avoid losing their policing licence.

At other times it's not so easy. Corporate security (as always) puts the corporation's interests above such basic concepts as justice and the law. More than one police patrol has been found dead after going to investigate a crime involving corporate secrets.

Rent-a-Cops

Rent-a-cops are something else. They are fully deputised cops hired by locals to police their streets. Most often, these will be found in up-market areas performing functions somewhere in-between private security and the normal police. Although they are paid to police specific areas, they are still bound to deal with any crime they may witness, regardless of the location.

Another place rent-a-cops are common is the affluent village. There are many villages and housing developments in Europe where the average annual salary is in the millions. These villages feel (probably rightly) that they are at risk and put together a small private village police force. Usually these village police forces will have their own police station, which is headed by a real cop with the rent-a-cops working under him.

Becoming police liaison for a rent-a-cop station is one of the best police jobs going (certainly it's very well paid). It is usually given as a meritorious award to a cop who has been wounded in the course of duty.



CORPORATES

Corporates are corporates are corporates. All over the world they're the same sort of slime really. What, me biased!? You're kidding! OK, I'll try and be a bit more open minded, no promises mind...

Corporate executives the world over share a lot in common. They all wear those dinky suits with collared shirts and ties. They all wear those ridiculously shiny shoes and those inanely smug faces... (whoops, try again)

Corporate executives the world over live the same kind of life. They deal with people from all over the globe on a daily basis; no wonder they all assume the same kinds of behaviour. It's a form of communications-driven interbreeding or cloning; they all come out the same at the end. Of course, this assimilation of personality is worse in the big multi-nationals where regular international cross-transfers are common.

So what are the differences between Eurocorp life and that elsewhere? Not many, but here goes...

There's still a lot of government influence in many European corporations. At one time or another, most of the European megacorps were run by their national governments. These ties may have reduced as time's gone by but many of the old connections are still there. National governments still play favourites with their suppliers. To a large extent they buy from the same companies they always have, the ones they used to own, though they usually explain it as being "necessary for compatibility and reduced learning curves."

What a load of bull, they do it 'cause it's easier and they think it'll help their citizens keep their poxy jobs. Not 'cause of any paternalistic feelings you realise, more because they want the tax money.

So what else do they get up to? Well, in most corporations, being transferred overseas is a definite sign that their greatness has been spotted. It's part of being on the fast track to the top. Not so in European corporations. To anyone currently based in Europe, the offer of a transfer overseas is terrifying. It's a sign they're no longer wanted. They're being sent out to live with the barbarians in the wilderness while the corporation decides what to do with them.

The corporations in Europe are very restricted by EC regulations. Health and safety, working and living conditions, minimum wages; all are covered by EC law. In many cases, they have to offer over the minimum legal requirements anyway, just to attract staff in the competitive European markets.

In the depressed countries of Southern Europe and New Central Europe things are very different. The NCE countries aren't covered by the EC rules anyway, they're not full members of the EC, just associates. Inspectors in the depressed countries are all too willing to turn a blind eye to 'minor' infractions as long as they get their little donations. Things don't go

well for those that get caught by the Interior Commission, though. By the time the inspectors have finished sifting through the papers of an offending corporation, those responsible would prefer to have been on the wrong end of a Stalinist purge instead.

Other than having to work around the EC, there's very few differences between Euro corps and any others. Just like all the others, our young executives have to suck their way to the top. They must learn to follow the pack when necessary—and then strike out at just the right moment.

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: AGNIESZKA LUTOSLAWSKI

HANDLE: N/A

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| INT: 7 | REF: 5 | TECH: 8 |
| COOL: 6 | ATTR: 7 | LUCK: 9 |
| MA: 4 | BODY: 6 | EMP: 7 |
| AGE: 25 | BTM: -2 | |

SKILLS: Resources +5, Personal Grooming +3, Wardrobe & Style +3, Oratory +4, Human Perception +5, Interview +2, Leadership +3, Social +2, Awareness +2, Compose +4, Education +5, Expert (economics) +4, German +3, Dance +2, Driving +3, Handgun +2, Computer Ops +3

Agnieszka was brought up and educated in Warsaw during some of the worst years in Poland's history. Luckily her school grades permitted her to go to the University of Warsaw. She graduated with honours in economics and stayed on to get her MBA.

She was snapped up by Rhinemetall as soon as she applied for work with them. In the past two years she has been promoted two grades and transferred to their head office in Köln (Cologne). Agnieszka is fast tracking her way through the German opposition, something she blames (not too loudly of course) on the weakness of the modern Germans.

Agnieszka is using her power to increase Rhinemetall's investment in Poland. She wants to bring Poland fully in to the EC and has decided that the only way to do that is to make Poland powerful economically.

She sends all her spare cash to her parents. They spared nothing to put her through university and she feels duty bound to pay them back.

Her only problem now is her lack of ruthlessness. She really does like people, and won't use and discard them. More and more she's having to make decisions between Poland's future and her morals.



There is one golden rule for working in Europe. Never, ever, upset a Goldenkid. Whether you work for him or not is immaterial. If necessary, those guys have the power to bring you to them (through legitimate means or otherwise) just to let you know of their displeasure. While you're at it don't upset any of a Goldenkid's protégés either, unless you're fairly sure you can cover your back.

By the way, can anyone tell me why so many corporate executives have a sleazy sales or marketing background?

Eurocrats

These happy chappies are just the same as corporates, they come from the same slimy mould and do the same sorts of things. They generally have to put up with lower salaries, but the perks more than make up for it. They get better living conditions than any corporate of the equivalent level. They also get power, all the power of Europe to play with.

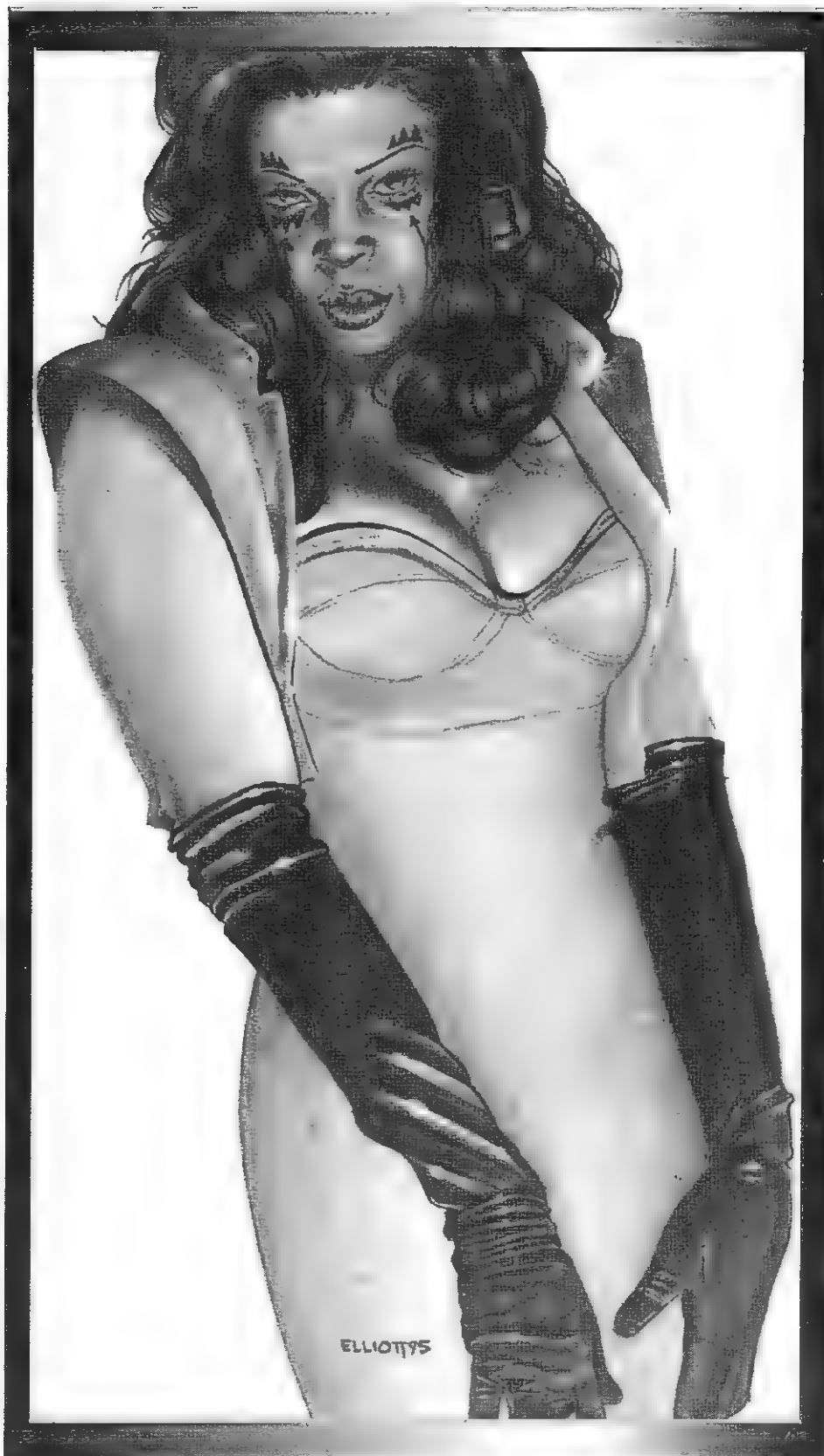
What power hungry corporate sleazeball could ask for anything more?

I have a window office, a handsome secretary and a company Av-Limo all at my disposal.

My American counterpart has these as well, but his window shows a dirty city, his secretary has no taste, and his Av-Limo is armored—lest he be killed on his way to the office.

Yes, the Corp life in Europe is good.

**Agneska
Lutoslawski**



ELLIOTT95

NOMADS

You can't travel anywhere in Europe without running into a Nomad pack, but they aren't like American Nomads.

Of course there's the fairly standard working pack. They're usually a lot smaller than elsewhere, rarely exceeding a couple of thousand members. They rarely travel together though as they split up into work groups as necessary. It's unusual to see more than five hundred of them together at one time other than the gatherings when they meet during periods of little or no work.

Working packs tend to be very heavily armed, for Europe. There is an unwritten law that permits them to carry more than other European citizens. Why this is permitted I don't know, but there must be something in it for somebody. All have multi-purpose missile launcher rigs capable of dealing with air and surface targets on at least some of their vehicles. They also carry large quantities of defensive munitions such as smoke and flares. All nomads will be armed while travelling, though they leave their illegal weapons with their vehicles when they enter towns and cities.

The working packs travel all over Europe following the seasonal work. Most have fixed annual migrations as they follow the seasons. There has been a seemingly concerted effort between the national governments to stop them in recent years through use of tax inducements, but it hasn't had any noticeable effect yet.

Many Euro-Nomads emulate the 20th-century Travellers. These groups were formed of people who saw no prospects for themselves in civilisation and broke away from it. Many of the Traveller groups had ties to Europe's old pagan religions. To them civilisation's despoliation of the Earth was the major reason they fled civilisation. To this day many follow the pagan teachings, worshipping the Earth Mother and attempting Earth Magic. To many the failure of the Earth Mother to cure the planet is a sign of how much damage the Earth has taken from modern civilisation.

The Rom

The Gypsies (or as they prefer, the Rom) are still managing to survive in Europe. The Rom are probably the most persecuted people the world has ever seen, certainly they are the most persecuted ever in Europe. They always manage to survive, though often through adapting to the needs of their persecutors.

The collapse of the old Soviet states back in the twentieth century caused a sudden change in the structures of the Romany nations. Many Rom left Eastern Europe to join the nations of Western Europe, a transfusion of fresh blood that has seen Romany nations moving once more in countries where previously the only Romany had long settled down.

The Rom trade in the margins of legality. A lot of their livelihood comes from their expertise in traditional crafts such as animal husbandry (animal handling) and metalwork which bring in acceptable incomes. These activities are usually supported by a limited amount of undeclared activity such as small scale smuggling.

Pirates

There are many pirate groups operating on Europe's borders. Most are simply maritime nomad packs. The Mediterranean and Baltic seas have always been home to many who effectively lived on the sea, though most would spend substantial amounts of time on land. As this century has progressed, more and more have turned to a purely seaborne lifestyle.

Unwanted oil rigs and old military bases have become small nations unto themselves. Many even have semi-official links to the EC as they provide Europe with many resources. All are at the least self supporting with kelp farming and fishing providing the main food sources. These are the bases that pirate packs operate from.

Most pirates are involved with smuggling in one way or another. With the rising sea levels there have been many islands lost as well as new ones formed. Pirates use these islands, especially the chains of smaller ones, to hide in. Island hopping is often the best way to go, rather than the direct high speed route.

Smuggling

Officially one of Europe's biggest problems, smuggling is the nomads biggest earner.

Nomads in Europe tend to specialise in smuggling the less illegal items, things they can take through in large quantities without raising the ire of the authorities too much. No pack of nomads or pirates could hope to put up much of a fight against Europe's armed forces, either the national forces, or the EDF.

The nomad's biggest earners are weapons and technology. They bring in advanced models before their official release in Europe, knowing there's a guaranteed market waiting for them.

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: OSKAR "OZZY" OCASEK

| | | |
|---------|---------|----------|
| INT: 3 | REF: 10 | TECH: 7 |
| COOL: 8 | ATTR: 4 | LUCK: 5 |
| MA: 8 | BODY: 9 | EMP: 6/5 |
| AGE: 22 | BTM: -3 | |

SKILLS: *Family* +4, *Endurance* +3, *Strength Feat* +2, *Resist Torture/Drugs* +2, *Streetwise* +3, *Seduction* +2, *Awareness* +5, *Education* +1, *Brawling* +4, *Driving* +3, *Handgun* +2, *Melee* +3, *Motorcycle* +1, *Rifle* +3, *Basic Tech* +4

CYBERWARE: Left Cyberarm with Tool Hand.

Oskar joined the Free Movers when they stopped at his home town of Bmo (Brünn). They treated him as an equal; before their arrival he'd always been treated as something of a joke. Sure, people were scared of him, but they didn't respect him or his opinions. Since being with the Free Movers, Oskar has learned self-respect. When he's with the pack he feels good.

The Free Movers travel between towns in NCE, sometimes stopping for a couple of days to do repairs and modifications. Oskar runs security for the pack and its kit.





EUROSOURCE PLUS

THE ROLES IN EUROPE



CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0

DATASCREEN 135



FIXERS

Now this is more like a job.

Fixers—actually in Europe we prefer to be called agents—are a somewhat different breed to those across the pond. There are still many of the old-fashioned hoodlum types going, but they've suffered a lot from current organised crime, and there's no serious money in it these days outside of the big crime families.

U.S.-style fixers always seem to have a lot of stuff in storage. They arrange thefts in the hope the goods'll be needed. They hoard everything in the hope someone will ask for it. Not a very good business practice, but often the best for the conditions. Here we only acquire things as they're needed. This doesn't mean that we wait until something is requested before getting it. No, that would be silly in an age when people want everything now. Instead we have to keep slightly ahead of the rest and know what will be wanted before it is.

The only things you should keep any stocks of are the standards: weapons, cyberware, a few drugs (though these are best left to specialists), maybe a few nondescript vehicles. Anything else should be as needed. Yeah, occasionally you end up acquiring something you won't need for a while, but if it happens too often you've got the job all wrong.

Also we try not to keep stock in overly...umm...wanted items. Once you start becoming successful in this business your name becomes familiar with the police. It wouldn't do if you were to have large quantities of goods they could give you trouble for. Instead, we ensure that those that acquire the goods for us keep them until they're needed.

Yeah, occasionally, you may have to get your hands dirty by handling hot items, but it's much neater to organise the delivery between the buyer and the supplier. If you have enough of the right contacts it shouldn't be too hard to find a buyer if some interesting merchandise unexpectedly becomes available.

The other, and to many the main, part of our work is to bring people together. There are always people out there who need work done for which they do not have the knowledge or ability. This is the most profitable side of the business, as well as the least troublesome. It requires a lot of knowledge about a variety of things as well as many good contacts and connections.

A lot of an agent's time, especially when starting out, is spent hanging out in bars buying people drinks. It is money well spent to make good contacts. As you get more famous people will come to you more so this kind of activity can become more relaxed and less essential to survival.

As agents we have to work together a lot. It's unusual to find an agent with the sort of connections as Jan in Holland. Instead we pass parts of contracts between ourselves, each

NPC DOSSIER

NAME: CHELSEA BLAINE

HANDLE: "CELLO"

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| INT: 7 | REF: 6 | TECH: 7 |
| COOL: 10 | ATTR: 7 | LUCK: 8 |
| MA: 4 | BODY: 8 | EMP: 8 |
| AGE: 28 | BTM: -3 | |

SKILLS: *Streetdeal* +5, *Personal Grooming* +2, *Wardrobe & Style* +1, *Human Perception* +5, *Interview* +2, *Persuasion* +5, *Social* +5, *Awareness* +6, *Education* +3, *Expert (Corporate Policy)* +5, *French* +3, *German* +4, *Stock Market* +3, *Handgun* +4, *Melee* +4, *Basic Tech* +3, *System Knowledge* +2, *Forgery* +4

CYBERWARE: Left Cyberoptic w/Times Square Plus, Low Lite; Neuralware Processor; Chipware Socket; Variety of Business Trip and Visual Recognition Chips; Reduced oxygen need; UV Protected skin biotech; Increased BOD bioware

Chelsea started her career as a fixer while at school. By the time she was expelled from school at the age of 16 she had managed to blackmail all the teachers at the school with the exception of the vice principal.

She worked in London for the next six years. Most of her contracts were for various underground groups. During this period she made many good contacts within Europe. She acquired weapons, munitions, and, later on, even recruited mercenaries for specific missions. In 2014 the MLA authorities were too close to catching her and she did a quick run to Holland.

In Holland she has become one of Europe's fastest Fixers. She deals primarily in military software and information, specialising in electronics media and equipment.

Cello has a soft spot for the underdogs and the downtrodden. Those she thinks deserve her help get much lower prices than anyone else. She refuses to work for corporations or companies if she believes the aid she provides is purely for their monetary or political gain.

Chelsea often arranges 'pick up' jobs so she can get the gear she needs to fulfil more than one contract. This is her favourite way of auditioning operatives who would like to do contracts for her later.

Cello lives life fairly well. She enjoys life's luxuries but occasionally overindulges. At the same time she doesn't care about money too much. Most of her excess money goes into supporting rebel activities in the UK.



specialising in a specific field. A circle of twenty agents in different countries should find it easy to accommodate even the strangest and most extreme of requests.

Agents need to cultivate contacts outside of Europe as well as inside. You won't get far if you can't get people what they want, and often what they want comes from outside. Scandinavian colleagues are a must, even better if you have some friends who can help you get things through customs. Other than that you could do worse than have a few connections in the Far East and the U.S. As often as not they'll be wanting things from Europe too, so it can be mutually beneficial.

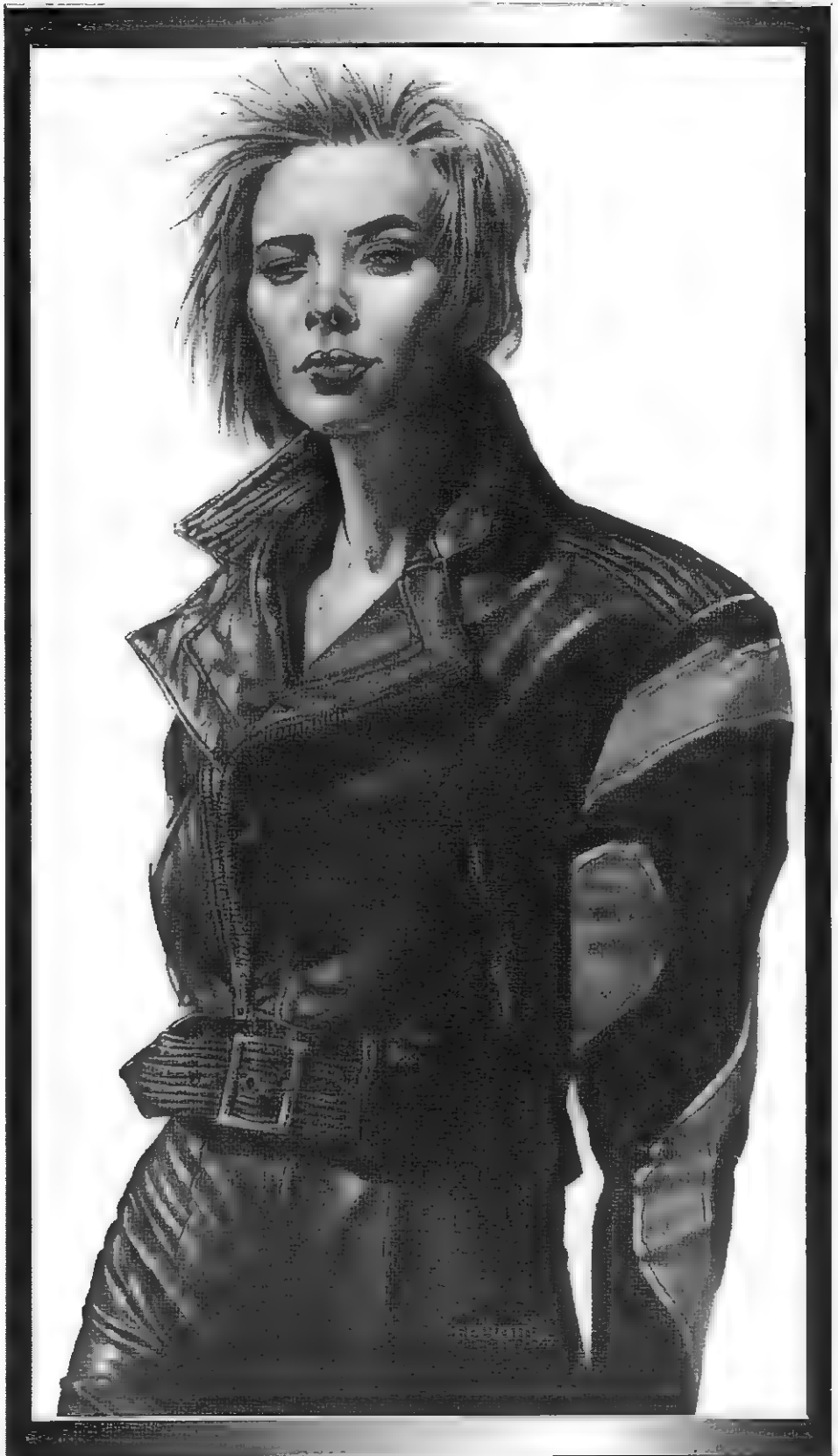
Agents specialise in getting people to meet other people and get hold of things. That's really all there is to it.

Considerations

It is highly advisable not to make enemies that you can't deal with in Europe. The powerful have a very long reach and it's near impossible to run away and hide if they don't want you to.

There is such a thing as bad publicity. Try to think about your clientele before accepting any job. It's not good, for example, to do work for the corporations in the NCE countries if some of your best clients are freedom-fighting types.

Make sure you know what is really happening. Don't take a job purely at face value. Make sure you know the background enough that you know *who* is really asking for *what*, and who is going to be upset by it. Check your clients' backgrounds at least as well as those of your employees. Avoid surprises and you avoid trouble.



TECHIES

Sometimes it seems that almost all the world's techies are in Europe. And they're all unemployed. Europeans seem very at home with technology. It's almost like they have a natural affinity with it. There's at least one techie on every block, every suburban street. The guy that's just a bit too far into DIY (Do It Yourself). The guy that does car repairs on the cheap. The guy that can rewire your flat in a day. The guy that can hot up anything ever made.

Techies have a lot of work available to them. A lot of it is pretty bland, but you gotta start somewhere. Don't forget, a bit of good will goes a long way.

There's a continuous need by vehicle owners to keep their vehicles within EC specs. Not many people can afford either the cash or the time to take their vehicles into authorised dealers for repairs or updates. As the EC insists on changing the rules continuously this gives techs guaranteed work, and if done quickly enough, guaranteed friends.

You probably know about the techno gap between what's available in Europe and what's available elsewhere. Yeah, I know it's for our protection. Well, there's a lot of folks out there that don't want to be behind the cutting edge or can't afford to be. Sometimes that little bit of a technical advance is all the difference between winning and losing. To others it's a status thing, they just have to be ahead of the pack.

The continuous energy shortages—brownouts and dribble downs—have created a growing market of people wanting to have their feed upgraded. Changing the priority on a block's electricity feed is unlikely to be noticed for years and can make you very popular with a lot of people, as well as a fair bit of cash. It's even better if you can team up with a netrunner who can update their supply profile on the local provider's system.

Those with cyberware are continuously needing maintenance and repairs. With the unstable supplies of cybertech in the region, there's always a demand for backstreet work. Don't forget about those folk with illegal or black cyber. They'll pay big time for quality maintenance, and if they like the job you do, they'll be back time and again. Don't forget those poor saps who bought their cyber from the dreaded *Urbemensch* line, back when it was the only cyber chain in Europe; they need your help...they really do.

If your skills are really good, you'll find yourself capable of running a profitable little line in cyber-updates. There's a lot of out-of-date stuff out there which just can't be replaced by newer versions. Those older models have different mountings and swapping in a new part isn't quite as easy as it ought to be. Even harder is upgrading to a new model which may require some serious modifications.

SCANDINAVIAN CYBER CLINICS

Scandinavia's clinics don't come cheap. They're not quick, either.

If you can get a place you need to book six months in advance. For an extra 10% of cost, they'll be willing to boost you 1D6 months. The actual course itself takes one day per maximum Humanity Cost of the selected procedure. The cost will be in the region of 1000eb per day, plus normal operation costs.

To work out the Humanity Cost of the operation roll as normal, then roll again and subtract the second result from the first. These courses will not increase your Humanity above what it was when you went in.

If you go for the cheaper clinics, subtract 1 from each die on your second roll, for every 100eb (round up) saved per day.

For those with weaponsmith training, there's some big opportunities out there. Every solo with dreams of becoming a true Eurosolo wants customised or, even better, unique weapons. They see their special weapons as major status symbols, proof of their position in the world.

Then there's the big one, covert ops gear. Every corporation, government agency, rebellion and neighbourhood watch group wants custom-made espionage gear. On top of that, there's thousands of independent private investigators and others looking for the stuff. If you've any talent at all for remote devices, micro-surveillance gear, or counters to said, people will beat a path to your door.

The Four Methods

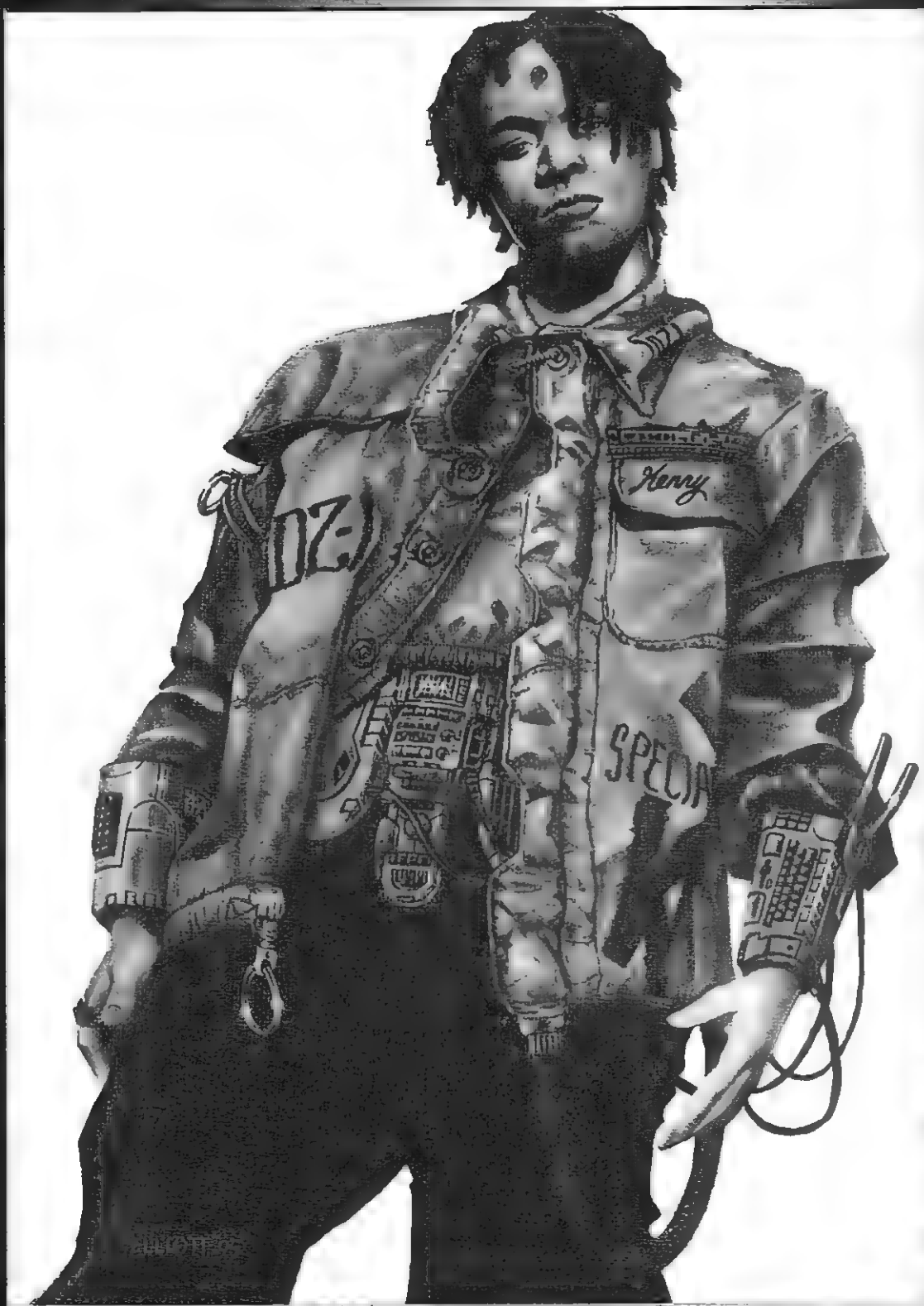
These are the four main methodologies of Europe's techies. Few are dedicated to one methodology, though most concentrate on one or another.

SCRAPING: Scrounging useful parts to build with, such as scouring rubbish dumps and sales. One corporation's cast-off parts can become another man's new security system; one man's useless old car can become another's new RPV.

REEFING: Refining existing concepts and designs (such as to upgrade power throughput). This involves checking out the basic design and circuitry and looking for things that could be done better. Then you build a whole-new, meaner version.

MAKING: Building your stuff from the ground up, using a mixture of standard parts and homemade to build all new items.





BENDING: Altering existing items, such as replacing selected parts with different pieces so as to change a device's parameters. This is probably the most popular of techie work; there are a lot of things available to tinker with and more new stuff every day.

Researchers

Although they're not true techies as such, there are a lot of researchers out there. These are your more scientific and less engineering-minded types.

Throughout Europe there has been a renaissance in new research. Small groups are getting together all the time to develop new ideas, new concepts, or just new uses for existing tech.

The reason—too much unemployment.

Over 46% of Europe's 'petigreed' scientists have no permanent work. They either become disconsolate and join the masses sitting in front of their vid screens, or they get out and do something. To these men, this usually means getting together and working on a dream. Most of the time they rarely meet face to face, instead, they work apart telecommuting via Net.

Mostly, they only manage to amuse themselves—no bad thing in itself—but every now and again, they hit on a winner. The entire team gets recruited by a megacorporation and continues their dream... on nice fat salaries.

Break-In

Hi-tech property defences require hi-tech thieves to penetrate them. In Europe, breaking and entering as an artform, is closer to tech work than anything you'll ever find a fixer doing.

Obviously, the honest people reading this publication wouldn't be involved in anything so seedy as theft. This is purely here for information purposes.

All too often these days you can't rely on a netrunner to open the door for you; security functions are placed on computers separated from the net. Unless a 'runner can get physical access to the machine, there's no way she can touch those locks. This means relying on the old-fashioned way, cracking the locks. Breaking through electronic locks requires a sure hand on the tools or scanner-comp. The sort of sure touch you can only get from a Techie.

It's funny how many techs are hired by Euro corporations purely for their ability to handle security. There's a lot of black ops teams out there who need their kind of "special touch."

MEDTECHIES

Where is the line between techie and medtechie? Who knows? I'm sure there is one. Anyway, meddies work on people, and sometimes animals too. What, did you think they called in the local vet to fix up a CyberPred™?

CYBERWARE UPGRADES IN EUROPE

- Modifying a new part to fit an old model - difficult task and 1D6 hours per attempt.
- Upgrading the mountings to take a new model - difficult task and 2D6 hours per attempt.
- For work involving products over 5 years old add 1D3 hours.
- For any work involving *Übermensch* products add 1D3 hours.

Meddies are essential in the modern age. From the docs running the show at the state hospitals to the little guy down in back who failed his med exams, they keep us alive. When you're sick, hurt or injured, who else can you go to?

Very little of a meddies' work involves fitting standard cyberware. It's a lot cheaper down the road at *Bodyshoppe*; they buy in bulk and get good rates. But if it's custom or, dare I say it, illegal wares you want, your local meddie's the one to see. For small upgrades to your hardware, see your techie, but improvements to the interface will need a meddies' touch.

Medtechies need to keep on friendly terms with a techie or two. Too much of their work is dependant on hardware these days to survive without these contacts. Most custom cyberware implants require the attentions of both types of techie to get it right. You'll need a techie to get the hardware to work as required, and a medtechie to make sure the man-machine interface works to spec.

Bioengineers

Biotech: is it the way of the future or a technological dead end?

After a very promising start, biotech innovations aren't exactly coming out thick and fast. Rumours are continually flying that there have been developments that aren't being reported, but every investigative lead fades pretty quickly.

Biotechies are beginning to appear on the streets. They're not common yet, but they will be soon. The biggest problem they have at the moment is the amount of space they need. Examination rooms, test areas, sterile mixing labs and wards for patients to stay in, all are essential. Their prices are very high, but when you include the basic costs of a DNA scan and the necessary hospitalisation, it all adds up to a tidy sum.

Special Cyber Clinics

Everyone knows about the special clinics in Scandinavia where you can get traditional cyberware, but with few or none of the attendant risks or psyche damage.

You can get the same sort of treatment in every European city, if you know where to look. It'll cost less, it certainly won't be as efficient, but it's there and you don't need to book six months in advance.

Be warned though, the cops tend to check these clinics very carefully. They'll certainly keep track of who's had what operations and upgrades.





ROCKERBOYS

Like everywhere else there's one big choice to be made: do you go indie or do you dance to someone else's tune? In Europe though, your options open very wide indeed.

We'll deal with the performing types first. The rest'll follow.

Selling Out

The Corporate Way

Yeah, you can embrace the corporate life. Try to catch the eye of one of their agents. Maybe take part in a talent show or twelve. If you're good enough, they'll take you on and push you as far as you can go, maybe further. Live the good life from your mini mansion and 5 star hotel rooms when you're on tour. Travel everywhere in glorious style: stretch limos, luxury jets, and AVs to beat the traffic.

OK, so you've got to be careful. Never do or say anything that might embarrass the corporation. That's no problem, they'll provide you with your words. All of them. Everything you say or do will be choreographed for you from your first appearance to your farewell show. Their agents will arrange everything in advance. Hey, if you're lucky, they'll even check whether or not you mind...

If you are lucky, really talented, and very careful, you might get to stay in the limelight for a couple of months. If the public really goes for you, it could even be a couple of years. But don't expect too much. Chances are they're grooming your replacement before you even make your first appearance. Public taste is a very fickle thing, and the corps are very good at tracking and directing it.

Things have improved a little on the corporate scene recently. There's a lot of competition on the vid channels and the public are getting just a little bit sick of continuous bland. This is as good a time as ever to get yourself a contract with an entertainment corp that allows you some control over your own future.

Just don't try to come out of retirement. Once they've decided you're finished—you are.

Going the Government Route

This angle is fairly unique to Europe. Governments own their own media networks and they're on the lookout for new talent, too.

The big guys in Brussels run the EC World Service & EuroVision. Both are subsidiaries of the EC Entertainments Service, an all-round media empire in its own right. Its official function is to entertain the whole of Europe. Its unannounced mission is to spread the Euro word; convince the masses how wonderful their life is. At the same time, they're trying to cut down nationalist pressures threatening to rip Europe apart.

Every country within Europe has its own entertainment service. Yes, the independent stations were merged and taken over

by the big services, but the national stations were branches of government, not available for buy-out. Generally these stations play along to Brussels's tune. No country wants to lose their Easie funds, after all. They do push their own countries, though. The national stations probably do more harm to European unity than any source other than poli-graffiti. What they have done right, though, is to push competition between the Euro states. No longer will the population put up with control from Paris and Berlin, they want their say and their stations let everyone know.

The government services won't give you the same megastar treatment that the megacorps will, but you won't be a five week flash-in-the-pan either. They build up their stars slower, to them they're a long term entertainment investment. As long as you don't rock the boat too much you'll be comfortably employed till you can't work anymore.

Keeping your Independence

The indie market's alive and kicking in Europe. The people want to hear the truth, for a change, they're sick of the rubbishy europap that's fed to them daily. Can you do the job? Of course the governments and the corps aren't too happy with the idea and will want your hide on their wall, but that's a risk worth taking, neh?

If you want to stay solo and let your voice be heard, you'd better be on the ball and have some very useful friends. Indies in Europe have to be very canny. You don't just record your latest masterpiece and release it to mass distribution. That way, the corps will be down on you in seconds. To get your word out think small and quiet, don't think about the money. Have a limited release, preferably put together by a personal friend. You might even have to help run the machinery. If people like it they'll make copies and pass them round.

If you're not into the recording stuff, take it to the streets. Let people know where you're going to be by word of mouth only. You'll need spotters so you can get out before they get you. If you're doing the club scene, keep it small, just in case you need to do a runner. Don't think just 'cause you've got a couple of hundred fans it's time to do a super outdoor concert/gathering. If your message isn't liked up above word will get out—subtly of course—and only the more fanatical of your fans will show up.

After a while, if you're good enough, you'll be an underground megastar with a big enough following to take on the goons face to face. Hey, when you're that big, they can't afford the negative PR. that'd come from going against you publicly. That's when you can start the big shows and really push it in their faces.

Just don't, don't put your fans at risk. Remember the Amnesty Massacre. Don't forget what those loonies in power will do to keep it. Manson died, he took the risk and he became a martyr. He took more than 500 of his fans with him; they paid the price without being asked. Don't do it to your fans.





Doing the Clubs

There's a massive club scene in Europe. Few night-clubs and bars can survive without a live act at least once or twice a week. Where you work depends a lot on your style and approach.

The big-name city-centre clubs frequented by the rich and useless tend to be tied to one corporation or another. They feed their clientele the sort of garbagemusic they think is entertainment. It's no wonder their brains are rotting.

Out from the mainstream, there's thousands of small venues. Small corner pubs, specialist clubs, dance halls and more; Europe has them by the truckload. All are on the lookout for new talent, but you better be good at dealing with heckling, it's amazing how much grief the small clubs can give to a new act.

The only problem with doing clubs is you get tied down for a while. This makes it easy for anyone who doesn't like what you're saying to track you down. Always make sure you've got an emergency exit route planned out in case of trouble.

Politicians

If you want to enter the political arena and fight it out in public, you've got a long hard slog ahead of you. Not only do those in power want to keep it, but they've got a lot of connections to help them.

At the local level you may be able to push your way through on the strength of your policies and personal magnetism. Any higher and you're playing a totally different campaign. You'll need to learn how to use and abuse all aspects of the media just to have a chance of competing. No matter how well you do there's a good chance they'll bury you, especially if you have any little skeletons in your past for them to use against you (and believe me they'll look).

Don't let me put you off. It can be done. Look at how well Joachim Krüger did earlier this year. Just don't think it's going to be easy. The powers have played the politics game for years; they're kind of good at it.

Non-performers

Non-performing rockers? Is this guy crazy?

Well yes, if you must know. But this is serious. There are rockers out there who spread their word in other ways. Poets, their words make you think without them having to speak them. Graphic artists, they can get your attention with a picture and open your mind with a five minute animation or video show. Cartoonists, graffiti artists, they all go for the heart and emotions. Their best option is to get themselves a tame 'runner. Get their stuff posted to a couple of BBSs. If it's any good it'll soon be available to the biggest audience going, the whole world. You want to make a splash, make a big splash.

RUNNERS

Ah, the border hoppers, scourge of the thought police.

Runners (a.k.a. "Jockeys") are an essential part of the European underground economy. They are the ones that bring in the exotic, the rare and the expensive. They're also the only ones to trust to bring in people.

Yeah, the nomad packs bring in people often enough, but they lose many of them on the way. To the Nomad packs loss of thirty per cent of the people they're taking is acceptable losses, but if you're one of that thirty per cent... The Runners are always looking for new, innovative ways to get their goods into Europe. The current favourites are low signature pencil boats across the Baltic and stealth planes across from the NCE, though this is sure to change by the time this is published. (For more info, see the Runner role in *When Gravity Fails*.)

SPIES

One of Europe's greatest exports?

Europe seems to be their main breeding ground, it's certainly their main meeting point. Every corporation and national power in the world has spies in Europe. They spend their lives working around each other, trying to get that bit of information that'll keep their side one step ahead of the rest.

They're hard to spot, but once you know the signs you can't miss them. It can be a great game, though they often don't like being pointed out to the rest of the world. (For more info, see the Spy role in *When Gravity Fails*.)

CHARACTER GENERATION:

Lifepath Modifications for European PCs

All European characters must take both *Education* and a foreign European language at +2 or better. Characters from core Europe must take *Programming* at +2 or better.

Use the standard lifepath tables with the following modifications:

- **Family Ranking:** Change #9 to "Urban Jobless." In core nations also change #8 to Urban Jobless. For #1, #2 and #3 roll 1D6: on a 5 or 6 change "Corporate" to "Commission."
- **Siblings:** Unless from a nomad or pirate background you are unlikely to have more than three siblings. Roll 1D6. 1-2, you have one sibling; 3, you have two; 4, you have three; 5-6, you are an only child.
- **Big Problems, Big Wins:** Change cash wins and losses from to 3D10x100 euro.



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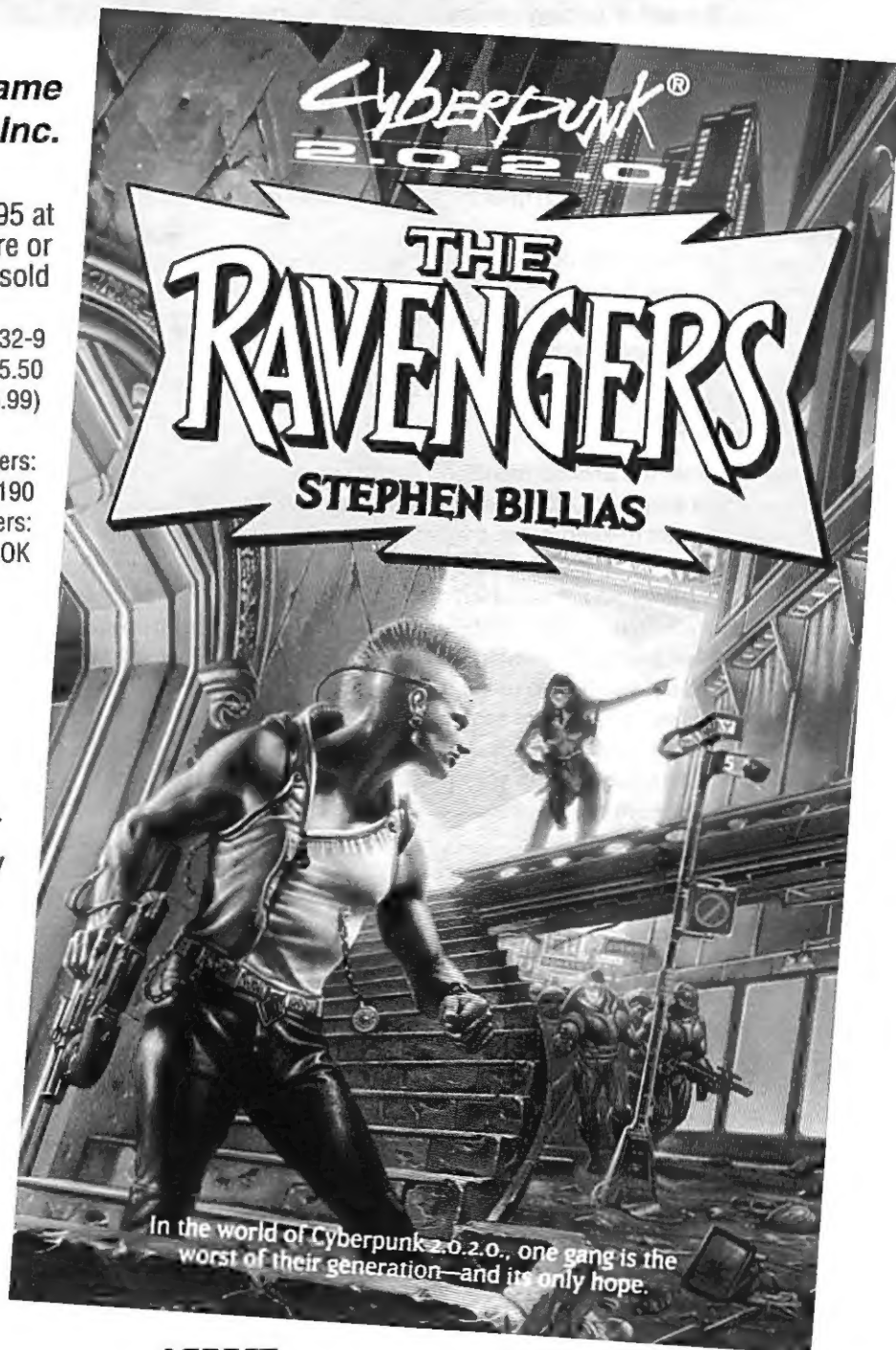
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